

HOW TO TRAIN
URBAN BLACK BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTERS
IN BASIC BIBLICAL EXEGESIS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this Doctor of Ministry project is to train bi-vocational ministers in the urban Los Angeles area in basic exegetical skills and incorporate those skills into accurate, clear sermons and lessons. I argue that that by providing training to bi-vocational ministers to do basic biblical exegesis in urban Los Angeles churches, an untapped resource will be empowered to become of significant benefit in many churches throughout Los Angeles.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

There is much to be admired about the black urban church and its clergy. Specifically, the urban black church was birthed directly out of the plantations in the Southern states and was carefully nurtured in a patriarchal, oral wisdom tradition.¹ Moreover, on the basis of economic necessity, the ministers of the urban black church became bi-vocational after the reconstruction of the South. In other words, ministers had to work outside of the church to earn a living in addition to being the primary preachers and teachers of the gospel. Yet, these early practitioners were never formally educated.²

Even today, bi-vocational ministers make up a vital part of the teachers and preachers who equip the body of Christ, and still many are not trained how to develop a sermon or a Bible study. I have noticed this to be true in the urban context of Los Angeles, California, where I presently reside and do ministry. In fact, within a five-mile radius of the church that I pastor are 184 churches. I compiled this information over a six month period during 2015. From January through June, I drove by and counted all of the known small urban churches within five miles of my church. Moreover, I also attempted to contact personally as many of the African American pastors who are serving these small urban churches. The churches are located between Manchester Boulevard, which is the furthest point south; Broadway Avenue, the furthest point east; Washington Boulevard, the furthest point north; and Sepulveda Boulevard, which represents the furthest point west of the church that I pastor. Two days a week I drove block after block

¹ Emmanuel L. McCall, *The Black Christian Experience* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1972), 15.

² John Ernest, *A Nation Within a Nation: Organizing African-American Communities Before the Civil War* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2011), 70-71.

within these boundaries. I discovered that out of the 184 urban churches nearby, 103 of them are pastored by African American preachers. Eighty-six of these congregations operate out of tiny storefront locations, which often means that they serve fewer than one hundred people on any Sunday morning. Knowing this information, I have concluded that each one of the eighty-six pastors is bi-vocational. Additional confirmation of this hunch is that I interviewed forty-one pastors out of eighty-six, and each one has another vocation. I was able verify that each does indeed received some form of compensation, but not enough to allow them to solely focus on their responsibility as the pastor of their flocks.

Additionally, during these brief interviews, thirty-two disclosed that they had some college background, which ranged from one year of community college to three years at a university.

Because it has been extremely difficult to collect all of the pertinent data from the wider bi-vocational clergy community, the research that will inform this project will come from statistical information I gathered for the Free Methodist Church.³

The Free Methodist Church has forty urban churches throughout the Los Angeles area. Those churches are cared for by a sixty-person ministry staff. Moreover, forty-eight of the sixty ministers are bi-vocational, and fifty percent of that number are black ministers and lay ministers who report to a secular job on a daily basis. Moreover, of the twenty-four black bi-vocational ministers, only two, including myself, have had any formal seminary training. Furthermore, I am the only one in that group who has received

³ <http://www.fmcsc.org>, *2015-2016 Appointments for the Free Methodist Church*, Southern California.

any training that is specifically relevant to the development of those vital skills which directly affect preaching and teaching the gospel to persuade others toward holy living.

Moreover, the vast majority of ministers and lay ministers such as these will not receive training for ministry at a seminary. In fact, most of the practitioners here in the Free Methodist Church, who pastor congregations of fewer than one hundred people in Los Angeles, have received minimal college education. Even though many of these practitioners have a desire to be better equipped for the important work that they do for the kingdom of God, there is still no specific pathway for practitioners to develop their skills in preaching and teaching. This is a glaring need. I explored this truth in my second post-residency project and discovered that all twenty of the participants that I interviewed would enthusiastically welcome an opportunity to receive formal training to enhance their skills in ministry. Moreover, eighteen of the twenty participants serve their churches on a volunteer basis and earn their living elsewhere. This economic reality does not lessen or excuse any one of these leaders from the weighty responsibility for feeding God's spiritual flock; nor does it diminish the need they have to acquire the necessary skills and training for personal improvement. Unfortunately, the economic reality only makes those values problematic. These factors further underscore the urgency of equipping lay ministers in urban America. Where can bi-vocational ministers, challenged with work and ministry, go to be equipped with the basic tools necessary to become more effective preachers and teachers of the gospel?

This is a more complex question to answer than one might imagine. In fact, before one can answer this question, addressing some of the underlying historical issues which plagued the original bi-vocational ministers and therefore the urban African American

church, its community, and family, might serve the reader well. In addition, it will provide more context in order for the reader to better understand the deep roots of the problem that still affects bi-vocational clergy.

This project, however, will not address all of the problems in the urban black church or the larger community it serves. Instead, it aims to focus on the practitioners who serve in congregations of one hundred people or fewer. Most of the men and women who minister in this context are not bi-vocational by choice. Instead, most earn a paycheck outside of their ministry and receive some financial support, but more often they receive no financial support from their churches. Indeed, this was my own reality in ministry as the senior pastor at Los Angeles Community Free Methodist Church. For nearly three years, I was not able to draw a salary. And I chose not to receive even a housing allowance because the ministry could not afford it. This has changed recently.

Nevertheless, to assess adequately the condition of the small urban black congregation and its leaders, it is important to point out that the success of these ministers and their ministries are inextricably linked. In other words, to borrow an old adage, “As the clergy goes, so goes the church.” Three topics, therefore, will be under consideration: the historical state of the early urban black church, a community seeking an identity, and a missed opportunity to educate the bi-vocational clergy. A fourth topic, defining expository preaching, will also be considered briefly.

Last, it is necessary to define some key terms. One term that is used in the history section of my thesis-project is “state.” The term describes both the historical and present condition of the urban African American church as it relates to being served by bi-vocational clergy. The next term to understand is “urban.” When this word is used, I am

addressing the context in which bi-vocational ministers of African American descent serve their church. “Untrained” is another term to be aware in this section. What is meant throughout is African American ministers who lack formal theological and pastoral training. Another term is one that I have coined: “somebodyness.” Somebodyness represents the sense of identity and self-worth.

As we have taken the time to articulate the problem and to lay out a course in which to examine some of the issues associated with the problem, now we will delve into the first topic of discussion, the historical state of the early urban black church.

The Historical State of the Early Urban Black Church

Before the institution of the urban African American church and, therefore, its ministers who give it spiritual leadership, black people could be described as existing in two parallel churchgoing groups. They lived worlds apart from each other. On the one hand, there were free blacks living in the North. This group was free from the hold of physical slavery but was still chained to the societal limitations imposed upon them because of their blackness. On the other hand, the second group is better known. They lived in the South and had been dogged by the reality of their status as slaves. After slavery was abolished by the Thirteenth Amendment and all black people became free, the reconstruction of the South initiated the freedom of blacks to unify as family units and earn a living for themselves off of the plantations. Along with this new beginning, however, came the eventuality that blacks and whites would not be worshipping together for long. Due to persecution at the hands of whites in church, blacks sought freedom in the arena of worship too. John Ernest argues in *A Nation Within a Nation* that “many

blacks finally decided that if white Christians were going to segregate the observance of religious faith, black Christians would have to create institutions of their own in which faith could enjoy free observance.”⁴ One has to point out that it was not easy to blend entirely different black churches, with competing worldviews, to coexist in one place of worship. However, that is exactly what happened. To that end, Ernest postulates that “despite the difficulties, the integration of the ‘invisible institution’ which had emerged among the slaves into the Negro church organization established by the free Negroes was achieved. This provided an organization and structuring of Negro life which has persisted until the present time.”⁵

The uniting of blacks into one church also marked the first time that African Americans could openly assemble and participate in a mono-ethnic worship service for blacks. Furthermore, another first was that these services were being conducted by black preachers without the presence of a white pastor. Until mono-ethnic worship was established, there was no such thing as a black pastor, at least not in the South. In the past, a white pastor preached the sermon to blacks. Scholars such as Robert Franklin and E. Franklin Frazier have reached a similar conclusion. Franklin says,

Early American congregations were interracial. As Africans became Christian in the United States, they worshiped in the same churches as their white masters and owners, but as their number grew to exceed the somewhat small white church-going public, both whites and blacks agreed that it would be better to establish separate black churches. In some cases, black people felt pushed out of the interracial churches and founded their own congregations in protest of religious racism.⁶

⁴ Ernest, *Nation Within a Nation*, 53-54.

⁵ Ernest, *Nation Within a Nation*, 31.

⁶ Robert Franklin Jr., *Crisis in the Village: Restoring Hope in African American Communities* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2007), 107.

Frazier adds, "The master, and more especially mistress, gave religious instruction to the slaves, and white ministers often preached to Negro congregations and supervised their activities."⁷ However, Carter Woodson reveals a slightly different reality in the North. Woodson argues that "freedom was enlarged. After the reaction following the American Revolution when men ceased to think so much of individual or natural rights and thought more frequently of means and measures for centralized government, the Negroes, like most elements far down, were forgotten or ignored even by the church."⁸ He goes on to say, "In this atmosphere of superimposed religious instruction the Negro was called upon merely to heed the Word and live. Experience soon taught, however, that it is difficult for a people to maintain interest in a cause with the management of which they have nothing to do."⁹

As a result, although blacks enjoyed some freedom in the church, they did not have much freedom in society during this time. Woodson argues that "the Negroes were loath to give up this liberty."¹⁰ He provides an example of this through three ex-slaves who represented the spirit and the thinking of the blacks who wanted freedom to be entire. Interestingly enough, all three of these ex-slaves were black preachers who became champions to other black slaves. They were considered by whites to be the kind of blacks who could be good help in the church because they could be trusted. Yet, for freedom, they absconded from their duties to the white preachers they were serving under in the Methodist Church, though they continued to preach the gospel at night wherever

⁷ E. Franklin Frazier and C. Eric Lincoln, *The Negro Church in America* (New York: Schocken, 1974), 9.

⁸ Carter G. Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church* (Washington, DC: The Associated Publishers, 1921), 61.

⁹ Woodson, *History of the Negro Church*, 62.

¹⁰ Woodson, *History of the Negro Church*, 62.

they could, in order that they might earn a living. Woodson says, “This was the beginning of something more significant.”¹¹ He continues, “The free Negroes in the North began to assert themselves after the manumissions incident to the American Revolution, as they were not necessarily obligated to follow the fortunes of white churches.”¹²

As we have seen, bi-vocational preachers served an important role in the lives of blacks seeking freedom by becoming the one person who could be that uplifting image in the world and who at the same time would provide a place where black people could be somebody. Today, African American ministers still place great significance on their churches being a place where disenfranchised people, black people particularly, find a sense of somebodyness. However, I also find that many preachers spend far too much time focusing here, to the neglect of being diligent in seeking avenues to develop their skills in ministry. Woodson’s insight into the minds of black people, then, helps to explain why black bi-vocational preachers became so instrumental in providing a champion in the community. Moreover, it may also explain how the church became the place where an entire community sought to find an identity. This is the topic for discussion in the next section.

A Community Seeking an Identity

The early urban African American church community can be best described in one phrase: a place to find a sense of “somebodyness.” This concept is difficult to understand if one has never experienced living in a state of “nobodyness.” However, in a few words, having a sense of somebodyness is the affirmation that who one is and what

¹¹ Woodson, *History of the Negro Church*, 62.

¹² Woodson, *History of the Negro Church*, 63.

one contributes matters. Somebodyness carries with it both personal responsibility and corporate accountability which belongs to the entire group. For example, when Jack Johnson won boxing's most coveted title, the heavyweight championship of the world, in 1907, it wasn't only Jack who won that night, but the entire African American community accomplished that feat. When Jackie Robinson broke baseball's color barrier, so did the entire black community. The black community was made proud or shamed based on each individual's somebodyness.

During the early development of the black church, nobody achieved a higher degree of somebodyness than the black preacher. He was the voice that represented a people without one, and yet he, like the people he served, was denied the proper education and training to determine accurately what the writer of the text meant to communicate to the hearers of his day, unless of course one was accorded the privilege to be a servant in the master's house or, as Henry Mitchell suggests in his classic *Black Preaching*, "Some learning was inevitable when one was the body servant to a white aristocrat."¹³

The second key factor that contributed to the state of somebodyness in the early urban black church was its vital community. Ernest calls this community "a nation within a nation."¹⁴ Like a newly forming nation, the early black church too had founding fathers: its preachers. Some would argue that the glue that held this community together was the leadership of the untrained black clergy. It is well documented that African American pastors, along with some women, emerged to give blacks access to the political arena and to provide care for those most vulnerable by helping them to receive the necessary social

¹³ Henry H. Mitchell, *Black Preaching* (Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott, 1970), 86.

¹⁴ Ernest, *Nation Within a Nation*, 13.

services they required both from the government and the church itself. Woodson maintains that “the Negro preacher, often the only one in a community usually sufficiently well developed to lead the people, had to devote his time not only to church work but to every matter of concern to the race.”¹⁵ Black pastors were also responsible for the creation of community activism and therefore groups such as the National Alliance for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), to name two. These organizations were indispensable in representing the civil rights of the African American community. Howard Thurman agrees. In *The Luminous Darkness* he addresses the somebodyness the pastors provided through the church. He maintains that “the Negro church has figured so largely as a rallying center for the civil rights movement in the South primarily because of its strategic position as an institution in Negro life.”¹⁶

While the church may have seemed to be a nation within a nation to black folks, it was nonetheless in reality not much more than a group of people that had been scattered across the South heading north with a Bible in their hands. It must have looked similar to the kind of scattered community we encounter in the Gentile church of the first century in the book of Acts. Moreover, the behavior of these urban blacks was also like that of the Gentiles, who ultimately heard the preaching of the gospel and then believed. Does this mean that their behavior and practices were identical to those of the first-century believers? Or were worshippers in the black church even cognizant of these similarities linking them to the primitive church of the first century? Most likely they were not. The real question is, what makes these churches similar in the first place? And what do they

¹⁵ Woodson, *History of the Negro Church*, 221-22.

¹⁶ Howard Thurman, *The Luminous Darkness* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965).

have in common that could result in the kind of dynamism that helps to explain how a scattered group of people joined together to realize vibrant community? It would immediately appear that what these early churches have in common are the four elements they practiced in their church services. According to Jeff Reed, “Once the church was scattered and churches began multiplying around the Empire, breaking bread was practiced on the first day of the week in small communities called churches.”¹⁷ As blacks were scattered and began migrating into inner cities across America, they lacked significant monetary resources. Thus they started many churches in their homes. This resulted in close fellowship which is akin to what was apparent in the first-century church. The anchor of these urban church meetings was not merely fellowship. Frazier adds that “the main features of these services were singing, fellowship, prayer and preaching.”¹⁸ Reed contends that practice of the first-century church was “devoted to preaching/teaching, fellowship, breaking bread and prayer.”¹⁹ Ernest argues that “it was more than simply these four elements. Coming together regularly helped foster a community that forged the self-determination and resiliency black people would need in order to make it possible for them to transcend some of life’s most brutal cruelties and to create self-identity and self-respect.”²⁰ McCall perhaps captures the idea of what this community represented to the urban African American church when he says that “this is a spiritually creative experience in the black church for her worship deals primarily with the only two realities, God and people—all people. Thus, a spiritual, social fellowship

¹⁷ Jeff Reed, *The Churches of the First Century: From Simple Churches to Complex Networks* (Ames, IA: BILD, 2009), 6.

¹⁸ Frazier, *Negro Church in America*, 37.

¹⁹ Reed, *Churches of the First Century*, 6.

²⁰ Ernest, *Nation Within a Nation*, 13.

edifies common humanity. For these reasons true worship reaches its highest expression in mutual group sharing.”²¹

We have seen how the hard work of bi-vocational preachers not only helped to marshal the new community that some liken to a nation within a nation; but they were instrumental through their work to bring about activism that was present in historical fabric of the urban church. However, one must also point out that the amount of work credited to the clergy unevenly favors their secular obligations. I am not discrediting their yeoman-like efforts, nor am I suggesting that what they contributed was unnecessary. I am simply stating that the past example of priorities has carried over to this day. Urban bi-vocational preachers still place work ahead of their spiritual commitments. Perhaps this is out of necessity. Nevertheless, the truth is, pastors who serve in the urban setting cannot continue to sacrifice the opportunity to become better trained to do the work of ministry. In the next section we will discover the role bi-vocational educators played to provide learning for the masses. We will also see how, when presented a similar opportunity to train the entire clergy, the church took a different stance.

A Missed Opportunity to Educate the Bi-Vocational Clergy

The third important element that helped bring about the state of somebodyness in the urban African American church was the rise of black educational institutions that were primarily run by the bi-vocational black clergy.

It is significant to note that all black educational institutions from the early developmental years through higher learning got their start in the black churches. Equally important is the fact that nearly all of the educators in these schools were pastors or had

²¹ McCall, *Black Christian Experience*, 36.

aspirations to that end. The fact that the clergy of the African American urban church were the most educated among the urban African American community was no surprise. Ernest maintains that “the first real educators to take up the work of enlightening American negroes were clergymen interested in the propagation of the gospel among the heathen in the new world.”²² While it would seem that the general consensus among the African American congregations and its preachers would be in favor of education for the pastors, this assessment would be a mistake. Some were suspicious about whites being involved in the training of black clergy. Many black preachers believed that the real motivation of having blacks educated to preach by whites was to excise all blackness out of the black preachers and the best tool was to train blacks to preach to teach expository messages that resembled the white culture. Mitchell agrees. He writes,

The early vision and concern for better professional skills among black clergy led to a second generation of clergy who were more and more formally trained. Because formal study related more closely to books, and there were no books written on black culture, and because the teachers themselves were often well-intentioned whites, training per se became more and more white oriented. With none to espouse it, African-rooted or black culture became progressively the sign of a lack of education. As the black community stratified, the polarities were education, higher income and white culture on the one hand, and ignorance, low income, and black culture on the other.²³

This fear of white clergy and expository preaching in particular is prevalent in many urban churches today. However, fear of expository preaching, in this writer’s estimation, is a fear that is unwarranted. That is to say, black preaching is supremely focused on preaching style. The primary work in this case would be to connect emotionally with the people. However, the exposition of a biblical text has to do with the foundational spadework of exegesis which calls for the preacher to pay close attention to the text and

²² Ernest, *Nation Within a Nation*, 38.

²³ Mitchell, *Black Preaching*, 79.

then honor the structure, grammar, and literary form of that text. In other words, the primary task for the preacher here is to proclaim the original author's intention. If Walt Kaiser is right in his assessment, then faithfully training bi-vocational ministers in expository preaching is the cure to black fears. Kaiser argues, "The cure for many of the ills afflicting the church and the seminaries of the day is to be found in the faithful exposition of the Word of God. Faithfulness in this area is the prerequisite for alleviating the deepest concerns currently held by the church and society."²⁴

Ernest, on the other hand, discloses, "But the desire on the part of the masses for an educated ministry was far from universal. The masses of Negroes were still impressed by the ignorant and illiterate minister who often boasted that he had not been corrupted by wicked secular learning."²⁵

These sentiments are still prevalent among many urban black preachers serving small congregations today. As a result, the urban black church, as well as the bi-vocational ministers, misses out on a golden opportunity to make training its most valuable resource for kingdom building.

The fact that the clergymen made their first priority the propagation of the gospel among the heathen in the new world suggests that at least initially leaders recognized their need to address an essential, ongoing need for training and educating its preachers. What truly thwarted the initial resolve of the urban church leaders in favor of educating its clergy? We may never know. However, we do know that this was not only a key moment in the culture of the black urban church but also a missed opportunity.

²⁴ Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament: A Guide for the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), 49.

²⁵ Ernest, *Nation Within a Nation*, 41.

Charles Hamilton contends that there is one primary historical reason that explains what seems to be a change of direction. In *The Black Preacher in America*, he reasons that “the problem is aggravated by two situations: standards for licensing ministers and the tradition of the ‘call to the ministry.’ The standards for being licensed to preach were and are lower than those to practice other professions such as law, medicine, dentistry and teaching.”²⁶ He continues, “This has not motivated some prospective ministers to put as much emphasis on formal training as would normally be the case. Some recognize and believe that the ministry is a profession in the same sense as other professions, but the field itself has not insisted on it.”²⁷ While Hamilton sees the issue of an untrained black bi-vocational clergy as a lack of motivation, others such as Xavier Pickett stringently disagree. Pickett sees the issue more along the lines of black preachers having to maintain a healthy skepticism when it comes to being trained to preach by whites. In his article against training black preachers to preach in the expository tradition he argues, “Contrary to most black reformed people, the urban black church does not need more black preachers who are socialized to merely preach expositionally like their white counterparts.”²⁸ Furthermore, he adds, “historically and presently, the urban black church has done an excellent job in cultivating brilliant black preachers. So why in the world would we rather conform to Western European male homiletics and trade in one of our significant gifts to the church, if it truly manifests the beauty and redemption of Christ to his church?”²⁹

²⁶ Charles V. Hamilton, *The Black Preacher in America* (New York: Morrow, 1972), 89.

²⁷ Hamilton, *Black Preacher in America*, 89.

²⁸ Xavier Pickett, “Expository Preaching: An Apostolic and Black Re-Evaluation,” accessed April 3, 2016, <http://www.reformedblacksofamerica.org/blog1/index.php?query=expository+preaching&amount=0&blogid=1>.

²⁹ Pickett, “Expository Preaching.”

Pickett raises a valid point. Historically, urban black churches have done an excellent job of cultivating brilliant black preachers. In fact, among those preachers are Dr. Gardner C. Taylor, Dr. Samuel Proctor, Dr. Robert Wilson, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Dr. Louis A. Patterson, Dr. R. A. Williams Jr., and Dr. E. K. Bailey, just to name a few. However, an important factor that cannot be missed is that all of these great preachers possessed an earned doctoral degree. While the majority of them were not known to be expository preachers, each man was respected as an accurate exegete of the biblical text. Moreover, all of these preachers would be categorized as students of the Bible. Another important factor that must be considered is that all of these pastors had the advantage of earning their living from the fruits of their labor in the gospel. This is the type of advantage that is afforded only to the few pastors who shepherd the large urban churches. Therefore, while I do agree with Pickett that the urban black church has done an excellent job of cultivating brilliant black preachers, I have to add a caveat. The urban black church has done an excellent job of cultivating brilliant black preachers in the large urban church situation.

This is not the case in the small urban black church context. However, it may be fair to say that many of these twin-vocational practitioners are gifted communicators. Perhaps they are even gifted enough to captivate a crowd, and maybe skilled enough in the art of black preaching to “make the gravy,” that is, to wrap up the sermon, excite the crowd, and evoke an emotional response from his hearers. But unless the preacher has understood what the historical writer of the biblical text meant to say, and then conveys the writer’s thoughts into its contemporary application, he or she has merely made a nice gravy, without ever serving up the steak. In short, this sort of black preaching is nothing

more than a joyful noise! Without being trained to pay attention to the structure of a particular biblical passage, especially clues such as genre, language, and key words, practitioners face great difficulty grasping the author's intended meaning and therefore establishing the "Big Idea." Moreover, these preachers, having no ill intent, are quite likely to impose a meaning on the biblical text. While Pickett argues against training black preachers to be expositors, I argue that urban black bi-vocational preachers desperately need to be trained to study the Bible and come away from their time of study recognizing exactly what the author meant and what the text means for God's people today. Anything short of this runs the great risk of falling in the category of biblical imposition. To this end, Randy Pelton argues,

Class after class of pastors has confirmed one thing to me: most of us do not let the biblical Text speak for itself. Over and over again we seem to impose meaning on the biblical Text, a kind of *impository* preaching as opposed to *expository* preaching. We do this largely because we haven't paid close enough attention or respected the structure of the selected preaching portion. We don't pay enough attention to the way in which meanings are developed by the author.³⁰

The spiritual needs of urban people are so pressing that black bi-vocational preachers can no longer risk showing up on Sunday and believing that their skills in making the spiritual gravy are sustenance enough to feed the spiritually hungry crowd. Spiritually hungry people need the meat of the Word and bread from heaven. Only after the preacher has furnished the essentials can she flaunt her skills at making the gravy. Being equipped with the skills of basic exegesis not only will provide bi-vocational preachers with a platform for preaching more accurate, succinct biblical sermons, but also

³⁰ Randal E. Pelton, "Teaching the Skills of Preaching: Merging the Needs of Practitioners with the Goals of Professors" (DMin thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA, 1996), 1.

raise the preacher's understanding of God, which in turn elevates the someboddiness of the entire urban church community.

Thus, having examined the pivotal role bi-vocational preachers played in providing education for the masses of black people to prevent them from becoming heathens, we also found out that they also missed the opportunity to sharpen their own skills and improve themselves for the work of the ministry, because they had a great distrust of the white clergy's true motivation.

In the upcoming section, we will investigate exactly what expository preaching is.

What Is Expository Preaching?

In *Biblical Preaching* Haddon Robinson defines expository preaching as follows: "Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers."³¹ Bryan Chapell maintains, "An expository sermon may be defined as a message whose structure and thought are derived from a biblical text, that covers the scope of the text, and that explains the features and context of the text in order to disclose the enduring principles for faithful thinking, living, and worship intended by the Spirit who inspired the text." But Scott Gibson's definition of expository preaching is similar to but different from Chapell's; yet, it is identical to Robinson's definition. He suggests, "Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical and

³¹ Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 21.

literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and the experience of the preacher, then through him/her hearers.”

My own definition of expository preaching reads, “Expository preaching is a message derived from a specific portion of Scripture to determine the precise meaning of the text. As a result, hearers are encouraged to adopt the attitudes and the actions of the text for transformative thinking and living through the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Robinson provides the definition which I will use as a standard to measure the preaching of others. Therefore, using his definition, I am reminded of the several sermons that I heard recently at the African Heritage Network Free Methodist Conference. Each sermon was boldly proclaimed, and each failed to meet the standard of expository preaching Dr. Robinson has put forth. I reached this conclusion along with another colleague who was also attending. After returning to our room, he commented that the preaching was great. I asked, “Was the preaching great or was it the talent to exhort? I further probed, “Which specific biblical concept did any of the preacher’s illuminate from any specific passage? What truth did the Holy Spirit apply to your heart as a result?” He was not able to remember a single passage that was expounded upon. Neither was I. In fact, we both agreed that although each preacher had used many Scriptures to prove their idea, not one of them had begun with a biblical text and then exposed the truth that the author was intending to convey. My roommate concluded, “That’s how I probably approach preaching too.” To that I replied, “That’s why black urban bi-vocational preachers and their congregations desperately need to be skilled in basic exegesis for expository preaching.”

Robinson's contribution is very important. He provides the key for all practitioners to apprehend how to derive accurately the intended message from a biblical passage, while Kaiser succinctly articulates why expository preaching is the surest way to affect a culture. Donald Sunukjian helps us to understand how, through expository preaching, practitioners are responsible for helping to disclose the flow of a biblical writer's structured, orderly thoughts from the text. He suggests, "To present the true meaning of the biblical text means the sermon must unfold according to the natural flow of thought of the biblical author."³² Sunukjian's point is not to suggest that the author's thought sequence cannot be re-arranged by the preacher in order to create a better flow in one's sermon. Rather, he is making the point that practitioners must not change the integrity of the natural flow of thought which unfolds into the subject and complement and therefore, illuminates the author's historical big idea.

Sunukjian's point may seem trite at first blush. However, as one examines the statement more closely, it becomes apparent that the only kind of preaching that is capable of communicating what God means to say to humanity is the kind of preaching that finds the preacher a willing participant with God, to preserve the integrity of the flow of God's orderly thoughts. In other words, unless the preacher sticks to the one dominant thought that the gospel writer is presenting, he will not be capable of presenting the biblical meaning within the text. Darrell Johnson expresses this thought a different way. He holds, "Whenever preachers take a text of the Bible and try to faithfully 'open' it, they are participating in the risen Lord's own opening of the text."³³

³² Donald R. Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching: Proclaiming Truth with Clarity and Relevance*, Invitation to Theological Studies (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2007), 10.

³³ Darrell W. Johnson, *The Glory of Preaching: Participating in God's Transformation of the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 53.

The lack of proper training for bi-vocational leaders in the urban context has to be addressed. Now that we have learned what expository preaching is, let us now explore the question that drives this research as well as the proposed thesis statement.

Research Question

How can bi-vocational ministers in the urban Los Angeles area gain basic exegetical skills and incorporate those skills into accurate, clear sermons and lessons?

Thesis

This thesis argues that by providing training to bi-vocational ministers to do basic biblical exegesis, in urban Los Angeles churches, an untapped resource will be empowered to become of significant benefit to many churches throughout Los Angeles.

In this chapter, we looked at the problem and its setting; in chapter 2 we will consider the themes that guide the theological framework surrounding the subject.

CHAPTER TWO

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Section two is the theological framework. Three theological themes guide my thesis-project. They are the theology of biblical interpretation, the theology of preaching, and the theology of discipleship. The first section will briefly overview the traditional method of interpreting Scripture. As such, we learn that the Scriptures of both the Old Testament and the New Testament are not only divinely inspired, but also they are authoritative. As a result, they provide God's people with the indispensable wisdom of God for daily living. However, in order to provide the reader with a wide view of the theological landscape, I will also survey the reaction to the orthodox method of biblical interpretation. This reaction occurred during the Enlightenment and was one of the causes of liberal theology. We will see how the liberal approach to interpreting Scripture rejects orthodox claims to the Scriptures being divinely inspired or having authority. Additionally, we will see how liberal theology replaced these anchors in orthodoxy with a scientific, rational approach based on nominal human experience. Third, we shall come to understand why neo-orthodoxy sprang up in an attempt to swing the proverbial pendulum back toward a theological center. However, because of the reluctance of its leaders to define firmly its theological stance on biblical interpretation, neo-orthodoxy became an eclectic, ecumenical middle ground of theology. Finally, I will briefly examine how feelings over racial and economic inequities resulted in still another method of interpreting Scripture that is widely recognized as black theology today.

The second section of the theological framework establishes an evangelical theology of expository preaching. In short, I will argue that the role of preachers or teachers is to herald the Word of God through the exposition of the biblical text and not the imposition of their own ideas.

The final division of the theological framework is my theology of discipleship. It centers on the biblical command of Jesus to his disciples: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt 28:18-20).¹

Simply put, training practitioners to preach is part of the church’s discipleship responsibility. Training is necessary to handle the Word as a faithful steward. Anyone who preaches or teaches the Scriptures can be taught how to do it better, and as I have summarized above, the need for such training is vital for bi-vocational ministers. The Scriptures demand it. Second Timothy 2:15 counsels, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.” My thesis-project will help bi-vocational pastors “be diligent” as I train them in the basics of expository preaching.

Theology of Biblical Interpretation

How one interprets the Bible not only determines what he believes about himself and his environment, but more importantly, it also determines what one understands about God. Based on this conviction, I am persuaded that faithful biblical interpretation

¹ Scripture references are from the New American Standard Bible (1995 update).

results in the Word of God becoming flesh and dwelling among God's people, so that we all might see his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14). In the upcoming section, we will examine the various ways in which historically God's people have sought to faithfully interpret the Bible.

A Conservative View of Biblical Interpretation

The conservative method of understanding the Bible, also known as the traditional or orthodox interpretive method, is a system of biblical interpretation that maintains a high view of God. Furthermore, it assumes that God is the "Author" of the Scriptures as well as the Creator of everything. In other words, when God's Word is spoken, the hearer is hearing directly from God himself. Therefore, all truth, knowledge, and the final say over all matters both in heaven and on earth are settled by God's Word, because his Word is settled forever. B. B. Warfield agrees. Furthermore, he maintains that "the Scriptures as a whole shall be received by us with the same reverence which we give to God, because they have emanated from him alone, and are mixed with nothing human."²

In a nutshell, conservative interpreters of the Bible maintain that the Scriptures themselves are authoritative. The authority of the Scriptures is understood by the upholding of two primary tenets. First, conservatives maintain the infallibility of the Scriptures. Infallibility signifies the Scriptures' full trustworthiness as a guide that does not deceive the reader or seeker of truth.

Second, conservatives hold to the inerrancy of the Scriptures. Inerrancy means that the source of the information can be trusted to be without error. The orthodox

²B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1948), 109.

Christian belief is that “the normative authority of Scripture rested from the start on the confidence that all Scripture is God’s true teaching through human writers.”³

For conservatives, the Scriptures themselves claim to possess this normative authority. We find an example in 2 Peter 1:20-21, where we read, “But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” The clear implication of these verses is that the Scriptures were given to the human agents as God guided them. We can be confident that this is the case, for in 2 Peter 1:21, the verb *move* refers to God, and it means “to cause to follow a recommended course of action.”⁴ In other words, these holy men only wrote the Scriptures down as they were literally directed by the Holy Spirit. Walter Kaiser proposes that “all authority emanates from our Lord and his Word. If he is not the final arbiter and source of authority, then how can we stop short of anarchy—where everyone is his or her own chief judge, jury and prosecutor?”⁵

Lastly, those who would subscribe to a conservative view of biblical interpretation would preach from the Bible with the belief that God himself is directly speaking to the hearers in attendance that day. To this end, D. A. Carson adds, “A high view of Scripture is of little value to us if we do not enthusiastically embrace the Scripture’s authority.”⁶

³ Sinclair B. Ferguson, *New Dictionary of Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 337.

⁴ J. P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), vol. 1, p. 464.

⁵ Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament: A Guide for the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 175.

⁶ D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, *Hermeneutics, Authority and Canon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983), 30.

We have come to recognize that from an orthodox perspective, biblical interpretation demands that God is the Author of the Bible. Therefore, because the Scriptures are both infallible and without error, we can be sure that they are not the mere product of any human agent, but they themselves possess the literal authority of God. In the next section, we will discuss how the Bible is interpreted from a liberal perspective.

A Liberal View of Biblical Interpretation

The liberal perspective of biblical interpretation does not recognize the infallibility or inerrancy of the Bible. The liberal point of view is that the Bible is not authoritative. Furthermore, a liberal hermeneutic calls for the rejection of religious belief based on authority alone. Therefore, beliefs must pass the tests of reason and nominal human experience. What is more, one's mind must be open to new facts and truth, regardless of where these may originate. No questions are closed or settled, and even the Bible, liberals believe, must be scrutinized and not allowed to be protected from critical examination.

Thus G. C. Berkouwer writes “[Abraham] Kuyper calls hermeneutics a mixed science. On the one hand, it cannot be separated from faith in Scripture, and on the other hand, it cannot be based on a source totally independent of and outside the norms of regular hermeneutics.”⁷

The authority of Scripture is not the only significant difference between conservative interpretation and liberal hermeneutics. Liberals actually view God differently as well. To this end, R.V. Pierard argues:

⁷ G. C. Berkouwer, *Studies in Dogmatics: Holy Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), 113.

A central idea of liberal theology is divine immanence. God is seen as present and dwelling within the world, not apart from or elevated above the world as a transcendent being. He is its soul and life as well as the creator. Thus God is found in the whole of life and not just in the Bible or a few revelatory events. Because he is present and works in all that happens, there can be no distinction between the natural and supernatural.⁸

This view of God makes him common with his creation. It springs out of a period known as the Enlightenment. Immanuel Kant had a major influence on this period, and therefore how liberals viewed reality, as well as theology. This newly “enlightened” philosophy led to the premise that human understanding as well as human belief structures are based on human experience. Furthermore, Kant would contend that the mind is actively organizing categories for what is being experienced. However, when it comes to theology, and specifically understanding anything about God, Kant maintained that this is knowledge that goes beyond the material world and is outside of the human ability to reason.

Pierard suggests that Kant believed that “if God is, in the strictest sense unknowable, then the proper object and study of theology is not God but man’s religious state and sentiments and their individual and communal expressions.”⁹

Additionally, Kant flatly rejected the idea of original sin, especially the thought that it is an inherited human trait which is passed on from one generation to the next.

Instead, he maintained that

whatever the nature, however, of the origin of moral evil in the human being, of all the ways of representing its spread and propagation through the members of our species and in all generations, the most inappropriate is surely to imagine it as having come to us by way of inheritance from our first parents; for then we could say of moral evil exactly what the poet says of the good: *genus et proavos, et quodae non fecimus ipsi vix ex nostra puro*. We should note further that, when we enquire into the origin of evil, at the beginning we still do not take into account the propensity to it but only consider the actual actions according to the evil’s

⁸ R.V. Pierard, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1984), 632.

⁹ Pierard, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 633-34.

inner possibility, and according to all that must conspire within the power of choice for such actions to be performed.¹⁰

The result of Kant's views and his approach to biblical hermeneutics gave liberals reason to abandon the historical view of the trustworthiness of the Scriptures. As a consequence, a new way of interpretive procedure has midwived God's authority and has placed it out of the realm of acceptance in their estimation.

This change not only affects how the Bible is interpreted but also how the gospel message is preached to the masses. Perhaps this is the reason that H. Richard Niebuhr had such a scathing summary of liberal theology. He held liberalism represents "a God without wrath who brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministration of a Christ without a cross."¹¹

In this last section we examined the philosophical underpinnings of a liberal interpretation of the Bible. In the next section, we will discover how neo-orthodoxy reacted to liberalism and its perspective views.

A Neo-Orthodox View of Biblical Interpretation

Neo-orthodoxy is a term applied to a theology that emerged during the early twentieth century as strong reaction to liberalism. This brand of biblical interpretation returns to the key themes of Reformed theology, yet it is considered "new" or neo-orthodox because it also embraces some contemporary cultural and theological developments.

¹⁰ Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 364.

¹¹ Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *Theology in America: The Major Protestant Voices from Puritanism to Neo-Orthodoxy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967), 71.

After World War I, the search for a new way to do theology had begun when it became evident that human culture was facing a significant crisis. This crisis revealed that liberals had previously held an overly optimistic opinion about human potential. As a result of this realization, the theological pendulum began to swing back toward a biblical center.

Karl Barth drew a significant theological line in the sand when he abandoned a previous liberal conviction he once embraced. Barth came to the conviction that the Word of God is moral truth. He maintained, “God’s self-communication is not merely informational, the setting forth of otherwise unknown facts. Nor is it a gracious act which establishes a state of affairs—salvation—in the face of which are wholly passive. Rather, God’s truth is moral.” He goes on to say, “It encounters us in such a way and with such a force that it presents both the necessity and possibility of active consent. It requires and enables ethical allegiance to the world which it manifests. And so the world which God establishes as creator, reconciler and redeemer is morally ordered.”¹²

H. Richard Niebuhr sees God’s Word differently, holding to a more liberal way of interpreting the Scriptures. He argues, “God discloses Godself in and through the story of Israel and Jesus Christ. As this story becomes our own, and we grapple in our lives with this true object of devotion, our identities and practical stances are criticized and reconstructed.”¹³

However, when it comes to original sin, Barth retreated to a more entrenched contemporary liberal interpretation, which is that sin is a relativity. In other words, man is

¹² John Webster, *Barth’s Moral Theology: Human Action in Barth’s Thought* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2004), 62.

¹³ Douglas F. Ottati, “God and Ourselves: The Witness of H. Richard Niebuhr,” accessed April 3, 2016, www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=75.

not really affected by it. He may acknowledge and regret that he committed an act, but he has no need to confess that he is a sinner. Barth states his position thusly, “The sinful act is regrettable but external, incidental and isolated failure and defect; a misfortune, comparable to one of the passing sicknesses in which a healthy organism remains healthy and to which it shows itself to be more than equal.” He further posits, “On this view the individual— I myself—cannot really be affected by the evil action.”¹⁴

In the end, neo-orthodoxy accepted the outcomes of historical inquiry, which argues for Scriptures being from human agency, rendering them to be a fallible, errant document. But because adherents believe that the Bible’s certainty lies in the fact God had chosen to make himself known through it, the Scriptures are thought to be reliable theologically to the degree that God may be encountered in Jesus Christ.

We have just taken a brief glimpse at the neo-orthodox view of biblical Interpretation. We have learned that this way of interpreting the Bible is fluid. At best it can be looked upon as being open to various interpretations.

As we continue into the final section about biblical interpretation, we will see how black liberation theology interprets the Scriptures.

A Black Theology View of Biblical Interpretation

Black theology is unapologetic in how it interprets and re-interprets God and the Scriptures themselves, in an effort to view blacks and the black experience in a more favorable light in an oppressive white society. Black theology emerged during the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Moreover, black theology is the religious counterpart of the secular term “black power.” Black theology puts black identity in a theological

¹⁴. Webster, *Barth's Moral Theology*, 70.

context and seeks to demonstrate that black power is not only consistent with the gospel but also that it is the gospel of Jesus Christ. These are the strong beliefs of a theology that was birthed out of great oppression.

This begs the question, how does black theology interpret the Scriptures? Black theology, just like liberal theology, maintains that the Scriptures themselves are not authoritative. The Bible is an ancient book that teaches truth based on historical facts; but it is not the only source from which we learn about God. James Cone posits, “While Scripture is not the only source that helps us to recognize divine activity in the world, it cannot be ignored, if we intend to speak of the Holy One of Israel.”¹⁵

Moreover, when it comes to God, black theology recognizes God as being transcendent or wholly other. However, it presents Jesus Christ as not only Messiah but also the avenger of the oppressed, who identifies with the plight of black people and stands against the white oppressors. To that end, Cone argues, “God in Black Theology is the God of and for the oppressed of the land who makes himself known through their liberation. Any other view is a denial of the biblical revelation.”¹⁶ He continues, “Because God has made himself known in the history of oppressed Israel and decisively in the Oppressed One, who is Jesus Christ, it is impossible to say anything about him without seeing him as being involved in the contemporary liberation of all oppressed people.”¹⁷

Black theology interprets original sin as being institutional racism or any oppression against blacks at the hands of whites. In other words, sin exists outside of the individual, as it does in neo-orthodoxy. Yet ironically, blacks or the oppressed do not

¹⁵ James H. Cone, *Black Theology of Liberation* (Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott, 1970), 116.

¹⁶ Cone, *Black Theology of Liberation*, 116.

¹⁷ Cone, *Black Theology of Liberation*, 116.

seem to be affected by it, but they are affected by it through oppression. Cone argues, “It is to be expected that white people will have some difficulty with the idea of ‘becoming black with God.’ The experience is not only alien to their existence as they know it to be, it appears to be an impossibility.” He then asks, “How can white people become black?” This is analogous to the Philippian jailer’s question to Paul and Silas, “What must I do to be saved?” The implication is that if we work hard enough, we can reach the goal. But the misunderstanding here is the failure to see that blackness or salvation (the two are synonymous) is the work of God and not man.¹⁸

As we have seen, black theology is a theology for black people. It is a method of biblical interpretation that is geared to suit black people and give them a reason to hope in a better future. Black theology abandons orthodoxy and embraces some vestiges of liberalism and neo-orthodoxy. However, black theology was intended to stand alone.

As I consider the theological landscape of urban Los Angeles, and specifically the context of small black churches where bi-vocational practitioners are serving God’s people, my observation is that the small urban black church is a theological mess. This is not an indictment but an observation. Because of little to no theological training, many have not considered the effect doing bad theology has, nor have they weighed the consequences that result because of what they espouse to the masses. I have reached this conclusion based on two training experiences. In both cases, I was instructing a segment of this audience in basic biblical exegesis. Near the end of our time, we discussed the use of resources. In both cases, I had allotted only twenty minutes for this discussion. However, practitioners wanted to know how to choose between commentaries. How could they be empowered to know the differences between a conservative, liberal, or neo-

¹⁸ Cone, *Black Theology of Liberation*, 124-25.

orthodox commentary? When asked how they currently use commentaries, the reply was that they use whatever was recommended. Others said that they go online to find answers. My personal conviction about the Scriptures places me into the category of a conservative interpretation of the Bible. I firmly believe like the apostle Peter when he wrote:

So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter of* one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. (2 Pet 1:19-21)

In a nutshell, I maintain that how one interprets the Bible not only determines what he believes about himself and his environment, but more importantly, it also determines what one understands about God. In the end, biblical interpretation is an area I believe I can have a tremendous impact on in urban Los Angeles.

Theology of Preaching

Whenever the message of the Bible is proclaimed, God himself is being heard from by the listeners. For example, when Jonah proclaimed the message to the Ninevites, that God would overthrow that great city in forty days, the text reveals that the people of Nineveh believed God; as a result, they called for a fast and put on sackcloth “from the greatest to the least of them” (Jonah 3:1-5).

Throughout the history of humankind, God has consistently communicated his plan of redemption through preaching. The writer of Hebrews discloses that “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in

these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world” (Heb 1:1-2).

To say that God has spoken in many ways in the past means that as the Author of the Bible, God did not always choose to communicate his message in the same way every time. In other words, God’s message to humankind reflects the many ways in which God has spoken. For example, sometimes God communicated his message through the stories of the lives of the biblical characters. These instances are referred to as narratives. Other times God spoke to the prophets in judgement speeches; we call those writings prophetic sayings. God also communicated through Psalms and short, pithy sayings; we refer to these writings as the wisdom writings or poetry. To be sure, no matter how God spoke in the past, in every instance in which he spoke and every time we hear his spoken word today, God himself was and is communicating his intention for humankind.

Jeffrey Arthurs adds, “God’s purposes flow out of his character just as artistry does. He is active as well as beautiful. He is building his kingdom, so the verbal artistry of the Bible is not simply art for art sake, it is art that accomplishes his purposes.”¹⁹ It is important to note that well before a preacher can ever embrace a deep conviction about preaching, the preacher must hold a deep conviction about God and the need for preaching. To this end, John Stott concludes, “Behind the concept and the act of preaching there lies a doctrine of God, a conviction about his being, his action and his purpose.”²⁰ He goes on to say, “The kind of God we believe in determines the kind of

¹⁹ Jeffery D. Arthurs, *Preaching with Variety: How to Re-Create the Dynamics of Biblical Genres* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2007), 24.

²⁰ John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 93.

sermons we preach.”²¹ I want to suggest further that the kinds of sermons we preach also reveal our actual theology of preaching. That is to say, our sermons tell the truth about what we really believe about preaching.

Preachers are vessels who engage with God in an assignment to herald a divine message at the pleasure of God. To this end, Paul contends in 2 Timothy 4:2 that preachers are to “preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.” But John Broadus, in *The Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, asks, “What do we mean by preaching? It means divine truth through personality, or the truth of God voiced by a human personality to meet human needs.”²² While scholars such as Broadus and Stott believe that God’s Word is authoritative, Fred Craddock maintains from a neo-orthodox perspective that as the preacher does his part and submits his work to God, then God takes the preacher’s work and causes it to become his word. In *Preaching*, Craddock attempts to bring the interaction between past and present contexts into a definition of preaching:

The preacher takes the words provided by culture and tradition, selects from among them those that have the qualities of clarity, vitality, and appropriateness, arranges them so as to convey the truth and provoke interest, pronounces them according to the best accepted usage, and offers them to God in the sermon. It is God who fashions words into the Word.²³

To be sure, the Word of God is powerful without the preacher. Genesis 1:1 proves this to be a fact. In the beginning God said, and whatever he said throughout the initial chapters, the creation responded in absolute submitted obedience. Bryan Chapell reminds us that “the efficacy of the message rather than any virtue in the messenger transforms

²¹ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 93.

²² John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1944), 3.

²³ Fred Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1985), 19.

lives.”²⁴ This point cannot be overstated. The Word of God does not need the preacher to reason with it or to manipulate it in order to somehow transform it to communicate with the authority of God to today’s audience and cultures. But when God communicated his word, he did so in the languages in which his people were already communicating. In that regard, he communicated to them in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. As the people of God spread the gospel, the gospel was translated into other languages as well. In other words, because it was the intention of the Holy Spirit to spread the Word through his witnesses everywhere they went, the Word of God has come to us already prepared to communicate across cultures to any audience (Acts 1:8). Moreover, the proclamation of the Word of God is authoritative simply because it is God’s Word.

Randal Pelton agrees and argues that

God’s Word is important. Exodus 19-20 record Moses delivering God’s message to His people. 19:5 reads: “Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you will be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and you will be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” In Ex. 23:22 God said “if you will indeed obey his [the Angel of v. 20] voice, and do all that I speak: then I will be an enemy unto your enemies, and an adversary unto your adversaries.” There is no doubt that a right response to God’s message would result in protection and favour (cf. Deut. 6:1-25).²⁵

He concludes,

Those verses tell what benefit is derived from the Word. No other message can accomplish these things. The verses also tell the purpose for its benefit—to grow capable Christian leaders who have all the equipment necessary to live well for God. It is the message of God that changes lives so that all God has designed for His creatures can be experienced now and forever.²⁶

²⁴ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994), 18.

²⁵ Randal E. Pelton, “Teaching the Skills of Preaching: Merging the Needs of Practitioners with the Goals of Professors” (DMin thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA, 1996), 14.

²⁶ Pelton, “Teaching the Skills of Preaching,” 14.

It has been sufficiently established that when the Scriptures are proclaimed by the preacher, God himself is being heard by the listeners, and therefore, the message a listener hears possesses the authority of God.

Preachers Must Obediently Proclaim God's Word

It is equally true that preachers must obediently proclaim what God has instructed them to preach. When Paul tells Timothy to preach the Word, the idea is that he is to cry out in public or herald the good news. The word κηρύσσω means to publicly announce religious truths and principles while urging acceptance and compliance—to preach.²⁷ Also important to mention is that the message that the preacher is to proclaim is not of his own imagination or accord, but the message he or she proclaims comes directly from the Word of God, and therefore, it comes from God himself.

Examples of obedient proclaimers of God can be found throughout Scripture. For instance, in Genesis 6–8, Noah is instructed to proclaim the divine message of repentance for 120 years. His obedience resulted in God's divine initiative being achieved when eight souls entered the ark and preserved a remnant of the human race.

In Exodus 3–13, Moses declares God's holy oracles to Pharaoh. We discover there that God demanded that Pharaoh release the sons of Israel out of Egypt, in order that they could go and worship him as their God in the holy mountain. It was not an easy assignment, but as the Spirit of the Lord directed Moses, he persisted until ten calamities had devastated the land of Egypt. Amid the final plague, Pharaoh's firstborn son died,

²⁷ Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, vol. 1, p. 416.

just as Moses had faithfully proclaimed. As God's people were released, we learn through the proclamation that God's Word has authority over human governments.

The prophets of the Old Testament also strictly obeyed God when they heralded indictment speeches on behalf of God. And when King David was found guilty of committing adultery and covering up the murder of Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, Nathan the prophet was obedient to indict the king for his flagrant sinful actions (2 Sam 12:1-4). Bill Arnold holds that "the eighth and seventh century prophets were dominated by prophetic speeches, and the exilic and post-exilic prophets are characterized as a mixture of speeches and prayers."²⁸

In "Teaching the Essentials of Biblical Preaching," John Carroll asserts,

In the Old Testament, preaching (the proclamation of God's will/Word), was done by prophets. It was usually prefaced by the pronouncement, "Thus saith the Lord." But preaching, while beginning (in the human context) with the Spirit of God inspiring a person to declare the will of the Lord, has its roots in the nature of God Himself. For it is clearly stated in the first chapter of Genesis that God "spoke" creation into existence. God brings all things into being by speaking (even where there was no one else to hear!). This "effective" word of God is the root of all "relayed or mediated" words of God.²⁹

Preachers are heralds of God's Word. They obediently announce publicly the message that God has instructed them to preach. But no preacher is authorized to proclaim a message of his own accord or imagination. Next we will discover that preachers are chosen by God and not by human selection.

²⁸ Bill T. Arnold, "Forms of Prophetic Speech in the Old Testament: A Summary of Claus Westermann's Contributions," *Ashland Theological Journal* (1995): 30-40, 92.

²⁹ John Kevin Carroll, "Teaching the Essentials of Biblical Preaching" (DMin thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA, 2005), 9.

God Chooses the Preacher

God often chooses the most unlikely people to be preachers. Several examples in Scripture can support this. Amos the prophet was a herdsman from Tekoa (Amos 1:1; 7:15). As a herdsman or shepherd, Amos would not be the popular choice to speak on behalf of a king or any dignitary. Shepherds were considered to be untrustworthy and unclean. According to the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, shepherds were on list of thieving and cheating occupations. This classification squarely viewed them as notorious robbers and cheats, which meant that like the publicans and tax gatherers they were deprived of civil rights (i.e., they could not fulfil a judicial office or be admitted in court as witnesses).³⁰ Amos identifies himself as the writer (Amos 1:1). His name means “to carry a load, bear a burden.” True to his name, he carried a burden relating to Israel (1:1), a burden that also weighed heavily on God’s heart. At the risk of death, Amos bravely delivered his “burden” of judgment as a consequence of sin. In unfavorable conditions Amos faithfully served as mouthpiece for God.

Jesus himself was an unlikely vessel to herald the Word of the Father, at least from a human perspective. John 1:11 records that Jesus came to his own and those who were his own did not receive him. Jesus was rejected because he was not what the people expected. It is also true, however, that his disciples would have to be considered unlikely candidates to preach the gospel. Matthew’s Gospel account reveals that not only did they come from unlikely professional backgrounds, but also none had received any formal theological training in order to prepare them to preach. By contrast, while the apostle Paul was perhaps overqualified with theological training, being a Pharisee of Pharisees,

³⁰ G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, and G. Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), vol. 6, pp. 488-89.

he too was an unlikely vessel called to announce God's will to the world. Paul's protégé Timothy continued this pattern of unlikely vessels that God seems to prefer. Timothy, being young, of mixed race, and timid, would not be the obvious candidate to herald the gospel.

What enables unlikely vessels to faithfully fulfill their task of communicating the divine plan of forgiveness and redemption for the entire world? The Holy Spirit. He is the supplier of power for the task of preaching God's Word. Carroll writes:

The fact is that in preaching, while one must study the text and strive to be a better communicator, it is the Person and power of the Holy Spirit on both the preacher and his hearers that changes lives. If that power is there, hopefully our teaching will make the preacher more clear. If it is not there, then preaching becomes the sounding brass or tinkling cymbal we are told of in 1 Cor. 13.³¹

Haddon Robinson concludes that at best our sermons are nothing more than two small fish and five rolls which alone could never amount to enough to feed the multitude that has gathered that Sunday.³² He argues, "Only Jesus Christ through His Spirit can do that. You must give your sermon to Him. Preaching is ultimately His work."³³ Without the Holy Spirit at work in the life of the preacher, the most gifted preachers have nothing to offer, because from the beginning, God ordained his Word with the power to give life. In the next section, we will see how the Spirit of God is active in the role of teaching and equipping preachers to become obedient disciples who equip the body of Christ.

³¹ Carroll, "Teaching the Essentials of Biblical Preaching," 19.

³² Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001), 223.

³³ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 223.

Theology of the Discipleship of Preachers

Anyone who preaches or teaches the Scriptures has to be instructed how to accomplish the task. The apostle Paul encourages Timothy to entrust to faithful men what he himself had received from Paul, with the expectation that the very thing that is being committed to them will result in positive returns. The word *entrust* meant “to give someone something in trust,” or “to deposit.”³⁴ It presents the picture of rigorous training. This is noted in the three illustrations that the apostle provides. First, he says to deposit the teaching in the faithful as a good soldier who avoids getting entangled in the affairs of the world. Next, he compares this training with the kind of discipline that is required from an elite athlete in competition. And finally, he maintains that the Word of God must be entrusted to faithful protégés by exposing them to the example of hard work, which means laboring in the gospel, like a hard-working farmer (2 Tim 2:2-7). Also, Paul demands hard work from those being trained. He counsels, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth” (2 Tim 2:15).

Leaders in the church must be trained to preach and teach effectively the gospel of Christ to reach a world that is cold and indifferent to the gospel. Furthermore, urban bi-vocational leaders have to be competent in the gospel in order to reach the uninformed concerning their desperate need of God. The task of equipping bi-vocational leaders today is tantamount in importance to training the rank and file in the primitive church. Practitioners, then, became soldier-like agents of God who led in spiritual transformation and became the frontline defenders of the local church against spiritual predators. By

³⁴ Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 8, p. 162.

placing a high priority on raising the skill level of practitioners in the urban centers of Los Angeles, we might create the ground for producing a model for reaching urban centers around the world.

In fact, Jesus himself thought that training the rank and file and the job of teaching was important. He commissioned his disciples to make disciples by teaching the gospel. In Matthew 28:19-20, he commanded them, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” While the direct command of the passage was for the disciples to go make disciples, the implication is that the very disciples he commanded to go make disciples had already been trained and therefore prepared to affect his command. Moreover, Titus 1:5-9 makes it clear that it is necessary to train leaders to do teach others the way of Christ and the apostles, or else the masses will be deceived by false teachers and rebellious men.

Training Bi-Vocational Leaders to Proclaim the Gospel

In my estimation, any study in the New Testament of training disciples to preach and teach (in the church) has to begin with Jesus and the Gospels. One reason for starting with Jesus and the Gospels is that we discover the origin of New Testament proclamation, but we also witness its powerful and influential effects through Jesus and his ministry to the outcast.

The outcasts are a subculture that is likely to be found in many urban congregations. Even though many in this group have heard the gospel before, they may

still be in need of experiencing the life-changing difference of the truth. Jesus came to seek them in the midst of life's difficult situations and despite their feelings of being disenfranchised from God's blessings. Urban ministers of God must also be trained to proclaim the Good News to the outcast.

The term *proclamation* is the Greek word *kerygma*. This is the term that stuck with Christians and is why they referred to the proclamation of the good news of the Jesus story as the kerygma. The elements of the message are threefold in this initial proclamation. First, the time is fulfilled. This refers to prophecies of the Old Testament that look toward to the restoration of Israel. The restoration of Israel has begun. Second, the kingdom of God is near. Third, the news of victory is being proclaimed. "Good news" was a term used for the news of victory as it trickled in from the battlefield. Right away, it is assumed that the Messiah is coming and will liberate the nation of Israel from Roman rule and set up the kingdom.³⁵ Jeff Reed helps us to understand: "The proclamations of the kerygma were also used as a tool of reflection. It aided the apostles in depositing the truth of the gospel in the lives of the new converts; but a secondary benefit to the church was its formulaic structure which allowed it to become a tool for training new leaders in the fledgling church."³⁶ An example is Acts 2:14-36, in which Peter proclaims the Old Testament prophecies about Jesus to some in the crowd who supposed that the apostles were drunk on the day of Pentecost.³⁷ Another straightforward example of the kerygma being formulaic is evident when Paul suggests that the gospel he had delivered to the Corinthian church was not only of first importance but was the same gospel that he had

³⁵ Jeff Reed, "From Jesus to the Gospels," Encyclical Letter, BILD International (Ames, IA), November 8, 2007, 6.

³⁶ Reed, "From Jesus to the Gospels," 6.

³⁷ Reed, "From Jesus to the Gospels," 6.

received from Christ (1 Cor 15:3-7). In addition, we again recognize the formulaic nature of the kerygma when Peter was dispatched to Cornelius's house by God to proclaim the good news to the Gentiles who had gathered to hear what would be a transformative message from God (Acts 10:34-48).

We must clearly understand that the proclamation of the gospel was the vehicle by which God-fearers and Gentiles alike were brought into the knowledge of Jesus indeed being the Messiah and true Savior of the world. In this way, it was and still is necessary for preachers to proclaim its truth to everyone living outside of God's commonwealth. Therefore, the proclamation of the gospel by Peter at Cornelius's house is a magnificent demonstration.

Pelton agrees that the gospel has to be proclaimed but adds that it must be taught to Jew and Gentile alike:

There is considerable discussion in preaching books about the relationship between preaching and teaching. Adams (1982) writes, "the word *didasko*, translated "to teach," more nearly corresponds to our modern use of the word *preach*, and has to do with the proclamation of truth among those who already believe the gospel (cf. I Cor. 4:17)" (p. 5).³⁸

He goes on to say,

The unsaved need to be taught the Good News of the Gospel. Those who respond need to be taught how to live like who have believed the Gospel. Preaching that teaches the Bible will also be announcing the Good News as the basis for obeying the message—Christ-centered preaching (Clowney, 1986; Chapell, 1994). Both aspects are indispensable in God's plan for His creation.³⁹

³⁸ Pelton, "Teaching the Skills of Preaching," 18.

³⁹ Pelton, "Teaching the Skills of Preaching," 18.

Pelton has correctly assessed that the gospel must be preached to the unsaved and it must be preached so that it teaches those who respond to it how to live before God. But preachers must be taught how to proclaim the gospel as well.

Making Preachers Disciples in the Kerygma

God's revealed plan calls for the gospel to be preached and taught by preachers.

A strong case can be made that God delivered to Paul a clear strategy for training leaders to preach and teach the gospel. Reed argues that Jesus and the Gospels are indeed the place to begin learning about the kerygma of Jesus. He maintains, "The Early Church referred to the essence of the story of Jesus as the *Kerygma*—the good news proclaimed."⁴⁰ Everywhere Jesus went he preached the Good News. Mark 1:14-15 reveals, "Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'"

I agree with Reed's argument for recognizing the origin of proclamation through Jesus. James Thompson, on the other hand, argues: "The time has come to recognize Paul as a legitimate model for our own preaching ministry."⁴¹ Thompson's point is not without merit. He reminds us that through the apostle Paul we also receive the model for establishing New Testament churches. Moreover, it is Paul's proclamation and teaching of the *didache* that is visible throughout Acts and the New Testament epistles. In the end, Reed and Thompson agree that Jesus and Paul proclaimed the gospel.

⁴⁰ Reed, "From Jesus to the Gospels," 16.

⁴¹ Reed, "From Jesus to the Gospels," 16.

It is not a small thing that Paul himself forwarded the training of both Timothy and Titus in the preaching and teaching aspects of ministry. For example, in Paul's first letter to his young disciple, he reminds Timothy of the reason that he left him in Ephesus. He says,

As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith. (1 Tim 1:3-4)

When Paul tells Timothy to instruct, he uses the word παραγγέλλω. The translation of this word means to announce what must be done—"to order, or to command."⁴² The sense that this word carries with it is that of a military command. In other words, when this word would have reached Timothy's hearing, it would have been recognized as a directive coming from a superior to a subordinate, with the expectation to obey.

Later, in 1 Timothy 3, we find a list of qualifications which are enumerated for anyone who is considering becoming an overseer. Among those qualifications delineated by Paul is that he must be "able to teach." Phillip Towner, a New Testament scholar, says, "This is really the only ministry skill or gift enumerated among the aspects of character that fills out this leadership profile."⁴³

Additionally, in 2 Timothy 4, Paul commands Timothy to both to preach and teach the word. He says to his young protégé, "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction" (2 Tim 4:2).

⁴² Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, vol. 1, p. 425.

⁴³ Philip H. Towner, *1-2 Timothy and Titus*, IVP New Testament Commentary 14 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 73.

Paul's directive to Timothy carries with it an urgency which reflects the dire situation of great importance that he is currently facing. Paul says,

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. (2 Tim 4:3-4)

We also clearly see that Paul equated the assignment of diligent preaching and teaching which he had earlier given to Timothy with his ability to keep the faith. Last, in 1 Timothy 4:16, Paul commands Timothy to “pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching” (1 Tim 4:11, 13).

Like Timothy, Titus too was an apprentice of Paul. In the letter Paul wrote to Titus we learn that the apostle had left him in Crete to set in order what still remained undone. Specifically at issue was the appointing of elders in every city. Next, just as Paul listed the qualifications of character for Timothy that spelled out the behavior of an overseer, he now delineates a similar list of behavior guidelines for elders to Titus. As a result of these qualifications, Paul warns Titus that true elders are recognized for “holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.”

Here Paul recognizes both preaching and teaching as being necessary weapons in the battle against false teachers that have mounted up at Crete. In other words, when the Word of God is effectively taught and preached it will bring spiritual health to any church.

Apart from Paul directing his young mentees to preach and teach, he himself was directed to preach or present the *kerygma* of Christ to the Gentiles. There are many

accounts in the book of Acts where we see Paul clearly presenting evidence of his training strategy, by modeling how to proclaim the gospel and providing demonstrations of how to strengthen or establish leaders in the gospel. I believe that Paul establishing leaders in the gospel demonstrates a normative practice in Acts 20:17-34.

There are two lessons to be learned and applied for training and establishing urban bi-vocational leaders in the gospel. First, the focus upon training leaders must be important not only to those who are being trained to preach the gospel, it must also be important that those already possessing these requisite skills be eager to pass them on to bi-vocational practitioners who desire training in proclaiming the gospel. Paul makes this point clear when he says, “For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.” The idea that Paul was conveying is that leaders are to avoid holding anything back in the learning experience, “with the implication of having some fearful concern—‘to hold back from, to shrink from, to avoid.’”⁴⁴ Another way to understand Paul’s concern is that leaders are not to “cease doing something of presumed positive value because of adverse circumstances or fear—‘to cease, to stop, to give up doing.’”⁴⁵

My intention, therefore, is to launch an academy for training bi-vocational preachers and teachers in the Los Angeles area for this specific purpose. This training will include periodic seminars and trainings that will engage students in learning a seven-step sermon development process which immerses them in Robinson’s method of locating authorial intent and the development of biblical sermons. Training will also include Chappel’s FCF concept, as well as Pelton’s enhancements on Robinson’s method of developing the big idea.

⁴⁴ Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, vol. 1, p. 165.

⁴⁵ Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, vol. 1, p. 660.

The second lesson to be learned from Acts 20 about training and establishing leaders in the urban context in the proclamation of the gospel is that this is an endeavor which must be commended to God. The word *commend* here means “to entrust oneself to, to commit oneself to the care of.”⁴⁶ It is clear from the passage that Paul recognized in this case it was necessary to entrust the ministry that he had prepared his students for to God. Even though he had physically equipped his key leaders with the necessary tools for what may lie ahead of them, he was also aware that the more significant challenges facing them were their own fleshly desires and more significantly, the spiritual challenges that were inevitably to come. Paul understood that apart from the power of God being resident in them, they would not be able to overcome. The same is true today. Therefore, as Paul commended his practitioners and the work in them to God, we must do the same. This is valuable advice that must be followed as I endeavor to equip the preachers in the Urban Free Methodist Church located in Los Angeles, California, to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. In this section we considered the initial part of Paul’s two-pronged strategy included a plan for establishing leaders in the proclamation of the gospel. Next we will discuss how Paul viewed his mandate to teach leaders, in the second part of his mandate from God.

Making Preachers into Disciples Through Teaching

According to Thomas O’Loughlin, “The title ‘The Didache’ comes from the heading Bryennios found at the head of the short text in the manuscript. It reads *Didache kuriou dia ton dodeka apostolon tois ethnesin* which translates literally as ‘the Lord’s

⁴⁶ Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*.

teaching to the nations through the twelve apostles.”⁴⁷ Additionally, the Didache was called such things as the deposit, or the faith delivered, the tradition by which one was taught, the Teaching, the Commandments, sound doctrine, or the Instructions. Moreover, O’Loughlin points out that “the didache assumes that its teaching is for all Christians, the whole Church in a particular place and that its information affects everyone within it.”⁴⁸

Justo Gonzalez maintains that *didache* is “the Greek word which means doctrine—is without any doubt one of the most important literary discoveries of modern times.”⁴⁹ He continues, “This document had been forgotten for centuries in ancient libraries until it was discovered in Istanbul in 1875. Besides this Greek text, there are fragments of translations into Latin, Arabic, Coptic, Georgian and Syriac. Despite being studied by many scholars its origin, authorship and date are still debated.”⁵⁰

Because the Didache was a writing of the early church, Paul utilized it as his primary strategy for establishing newly formed churches. However, he also found it useful for training his key leaders. In “A Distinctive Way of Life,” Kevin Perrotta says, “We usually think of the Christian message as a set of beliefs and miss the New Testament’s emphasis on the body of teaching about the Christian way of life. Jesus made it a central part of His ministry to instruct His disciples in the life God intended men and women to live.”⁵¹

Since the Didache was understood as the description of the Two Ways, it therefore, may be divided into two parts. The first part includes worship, baptism, and the

⁴⁷ Thomas O’Loughlin, *The Didache: A Window on the Earliest Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2010), 5.

⁴⁸ O’Loughlin, *The Didache*, 6.

⁴⁹ Justo L. Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought*, vol. 1, *From the Beginnings to Chalcedon*, rev. ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1970), 67.

⁵⁰ Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought*, 1:67.

⁵¹ Perrotta, “Distinctive Way of Life,” 89.

Eucharist. The second section emphasizes directions concerning officers and the conduct of congregational affairs. The contrast between the two ways is an ethical one. It is set forth in a form for use in teaching catechumens. Herein lies the difference between preaching and teaching. Preaching occurs in the public forum, like Peter's address on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-36) or Peter's sermon at Cornelius's house (Acts 10:34-43) or Paul's speech at Athens (Acts 17:22-31). But teaching seems to focus on church order and the conduct of God's people. In other words, teaching clearly reflects the moral instruction of the Old Testament.

An example of how the Didache provided directions concerning officers and the conduct of congregational affairs is seen in Paul's letter to Titus. As mentioned earlier, Paul's instruction to Titus borrowed from the Didache to provide the requisite training for appointing elders in the church at Crete. Instructing these leading men by the light of the Didache meant that "they were expected to watch over the spiritual flock and to provide protection against the false teachers that were upsetting entire households."⁵²

It is my conviction that our modern-day didache (the epistles) which Paul used should be adopted as the curriculum for training urban bi-vocational preachers and teachers in Los Angeles. To accomplish this task, however, urban churches must commit themselves to assuming responsibility for training the promising leaders under their care. In "Education and Leadership," Jonathan Chao submits,

There is a great need to improve theological education, especially for church leaders. In every nation and culture there should be an effective training programme for pastors and laymen in doctrine, evangelism, nurture and service.

⁵² Perrota, "Distinctive Way of Life," 89.

Such training programmes should not rely on any stereotyped methodology but should be developed by creative local initiatives according to biblical standards.⁵³

Chao's point is hard to ignore, especially in light of the plethora of health, wealth, and prosperity television and radio evangelists who tout their "anointing" to teach God's people "how to get the blessings of God." Along with these evangelists are the many quasi-denominational online organizations that peddle an ordination system which will bestow upon an urban preacher the office of bishop or apostle, as a method of promoting their own spiritual multilevel marketing downline or retirement plan. Websites such as nowallsministry.com advertise that for a fee,

YOU CAN BECOME A NO WALLS MINISTRY ORDAINED MINISTER, WEDDING OFFICIANT OR EVEN A BISHOP. BISHOP IS AN EARNED DEGREE. ONCE A NO WALLS MINISTRY ORDAINED MINISTER OR A BISHOP YOU ARE LEGALLY A WEDDING OFFICIANT ABLE TO MARRY AND MUCH MORE.

* Written Summary of how you will use your Certification

* 2,000 word, written report about any spiritual feelings you may have (Both must be sent (emailed) to our offices prior to Certificate being produced. This is an EARNED DEGREE).⁵⁴

By contrast, there is a tremendous dearth of training in sound doctrine in urban Los Angeles. And in order to turn the spiritual tide, true church leaders in urban Los

⁵³ Jonathan Chao, "Education and Leadership," chap. 11 in *New Face of Evangelism: An International Symposium on the Lausanne Covenant*, ed. Rene Padilla (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976), 192.

⁵⁴ <http://www.nowallsministry.com/bishop-ordained-minister.html>, accessed April 3, 2016.

Angeles must recognize the admonition of apostle Paul and obey his instruction found in 2 Timothy 4:3-5, where he says,

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Reed suggests the way to accomplish this task in the urban centers is threefold. He argues for

building a training strategy that grows out of the life of local churches and takes place in the context of laboring to establish local churches. Leaders are vitally involved in the training process as learners among leaders; learning is stimulated through discussion and debate; and assessment is made primarily through articulation of issues and implementation or application of personal or corporate strategies. Those involved in the training process model, entrust, and mentor faithful men who have demonstrated leadership ability and desire.⁵⁵

While Reed's plan calls for the training of bi-vocational preachers to be church based, he is not advocating that we dispense with seminary training. There is room for both systems. However, because most bi-vocational ministers work full-time apart from serving the church for as many hours, it only makes sense that training be based in their local ministry or one that is nearby. This will enable these practitioners to center the focus on any projects that may arise out of their training on their specific local ministry. Reed does point out, however, that church-based theological training should not be church-housed theological training. He distinguishes church-housed theological training as building theological education which is essentially based in an institutional or organizational model, inside the four walls of a church building. The leaders of churches

⁵⁵ Jeff Reed, "Church-Based Theological Education: Creating a New Paradigm," Encyclical Letter, BILD International (Ames, IA), November 8, 2007, 9.

are involved only in a token way; instruction is given primarily through a formal model of lecture; and assessment is made primarily through testing.

Finally, for Reed, the third concept that is concomitant to this training process is that church-based theological training must remain a flexible leadership development strategy that is rooted in the life and ministry of local churches. Therefore, there is no need to look outside of the church for preachers, teachers, or leaders, because students/leaders are being taught the didache and regularly discussing sound doctrine. Furthermore, they are responsible for entrusting or depositing what they have heard and entrusting more and more of the ministry to other faithful men and women⁵⁶ while they themselves remain deeply involved in the process of establishing churches in the teaching. A commitment to nurture through this system will insure that the urban church will always have well-trained leaders, teachers, and preachers.

The specific process of entrusting bi-vocational preachers in Los Angeles with the skills to teach and preach expository bible messages and sermons is a topic that must be fully unpacked. I will fully probe that discussion in the project design. However, prior to that, I will delve into the next section, the literature review.

⁵⁶ Reed, "Church-Based Theological Education," 9.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

The subject of preaching is saturated with a high quality of seemingly inexhaustible material to aid preachers in the development of their sermons. Yet, if one were to experience much of the preaching in urban Los Angeles, he could easily be led to believe that the only resource that is available to these preachers is the biblical text. Walter Kaiser maintains that “Expository preaching/teaching involves more than using a biblical passage as a springboard or point of reference in what otherwise could best be called a topical message.”¹ He further posits, “In fact, our teaching and preaching is so desperately weak at the present moment in the household of faith because of a scarcity of true biblical exegesis.”² With this haunting thought etched in mind, we launch into the literature review of preaching.

The books being examined are those that are widely regarded for the contribution they have made in the area of basic sermon development. Moreover, the authors are highly esteemed as men who possess expertise in this field. Section one launches us into an examination of basic biblical exegesis, I discuss how to locate the biblical Big Idea and how the Big Idea fosters unity in preaching. In section two, we will survey the use of the sermon’s purpose, which is the primary reason or underlying “why” the preacher is motivated to preach that sermon. In section three, we consider resources that explore how to develop a basic sermon outline. Last, in the fourth and final section, will wrap up this chapter with a review of the sermon conclusion.

¹ Walter C. Kaiser, *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 49.

² Kaiser, *Preaching and Teaching*, 49.

The Big Idea

The first topic my literature review takes up is the author's intended meaning. It is important to understand what has been written on this topic because my thesis-project relates directly to basic biblical exegesis. That is, I will train black urban bi-vocational preachers to locate the authorial intent of a given text.

Having a method of doing good basic biblical exegesis leads to the development of sound and accurate big ideas. Furthermore, good basic biblical exegesis necessarily precedes one forming the Big Idea, because it represents the requisite spade work and discipline which exegetes must possess in order to glean the original writer's intention. Three key authors provide the most influential writings on the topic of basic biblical exegesis. All of them are similar, but each has his own angle on the topic, which I explain below.

Robert Chisholm is a highly celebrated scholar of Old Testament studies at Dallas Theological Seminary. He has also published numerous articles on interpreting the Minor Prophets. In *From Exegesis to Exposition*, Chisholm maintains that “the interpreter must bring to the study of the text an awareness of the historical and cultural context of ancient Israel in general, and if possible, of the specific passage in view.”³ He goes on to say, “The exegete must also possess an awareness of two basic literary genres—narrative and poetry. Without knowing how these genres work, the interpreter can miss the message of the story, song or speech.”⁴ Chisholm's point is well taken and represents sound advice that urban black bi-vocational ministers would do well to heed.

³ Robert B. Chisholm Jr., *From Exegesis to Exposition: A Practical Guide to Using Biblical Hebrew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998), 187.

⁴ Chisholm, *From Exegesis to Exposition*, 187.

Chisholm also proposes a seven-step method practitioners may follow in order to apprehend the writer's intention for a given text. Furthermore, he chronicles each step in detail. Step one is entitled "Viewing the Forest." Chisholm suggests that the exegete "mark out the literary unit and then develop a tentative outline of each literary unit's structure/paragraph divisions." He also warns students to "look for shifts in scene, focus, and/or theme."⁵ Step two he calls "Entering the Woods." In this step he suggests that the practitioner take the time not only to develop a working translation of the passage but also to outline its basic structure. Moreover, it is important to Chisholm that the exegete "make as many observations as possible on how the narrative structure contributes to the narrator's rhetorical strategy."⁶ In "Looking at the Trees," or step three, Chisholm lays out a lengthy to-do list in order to take a closer look at the trees:

- (a) Isolate nouns and adjective/participles.
- (b) Isolate all pronouns (including suffixes) and identify the antecedent for each.
- (c) Take note of all articles, prepositions, and conjunctions.
- (d) Isolate all infinitives.
- (e) Parse every verb form.
- (f) Determine the precise contextual nuance of each word and/or phrase.
- (g) Isolate key words that are repeated in the text and/or particularly important in understanding the text's meaning and theme.
- (h) Examine the text-critical problems discussed in a critical commentary.
- (i) Identify subordinate clauses and analyze those that are important and/or nonroutine.
- (j) Study several up-to-date translations of the passage and read two or three in good critical commentaries on the text.

Step four is "Synthesizing Observations." The purpose of this step is to make any needed revisions in any conclusions you have developed in the earlier steps. Step five is "Looking beneath the Surface." The task here is to pay close attention to the details of the main story line. This means one must be able to explain and account for how every detail

⁵ Chisholm, *From Exegesis to Exposition*, 188.

⁶ Chisholm, *From Exegesis to Exposition*, 188.

fits and contributes to the passage. Step six is “Leaving the Woods.” The task is to summarize the main literary/theological theme(s) and lesson(s) of the story. And finally, step seven is “Viewing the Forest Again.” The exegete has the responsibility for relating the literary/theological theme(s) of the literary unit to overriding theme(s) of the anthology as a whole. As one can see, Chisholm’s method demands much of the practitioner of basic biblical exegesis.

Another professor of Old Testament, who is currently at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, is Douglas Stuart. Stuart’s method of basic biblical exegesis is quite similar to Chisholm’s. He too has a several-step process, but instead of seven steps Stuart’s method possesses six steps. Rather than listing every step of Stuart here, I will instead focus on two significant differences between these writers. The first modification is apparent with step one. As an alternative to beginning with an outline of the passage (Chisholm), Stuart suggests that the exegete read the passage repeatedly. He advises the prudent student, “Go over the passage out loud, in the Hebrew if possible. Try to get a feel for the passage as a unit conveying God’s word to you and your congregation.”⁷ Stuart further posits, “Try to become sufficiently familiar with the passage so that you can keep its essentials in your head as you carry on through the next five steps.”⁸

Another step that is different in Stuart’s exegetical process in step six is application. Of particular significance in this section is identifying the audience and categories of application. Stuart suggests that the exegete be sure to know “Are the life issues of the passage instructive primarily to individuals or primarily to corporate entities,

⁷ Douglas Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Primer for Students and Pastors* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1980), 57.

⁸ Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis*, 57.

or is there no differentiation?”⁹ Next, he asks, “Are life issues related to or confined to certain categories such as interpersonal relationships, piety, finances, spirituality, and social behavior family life?”¹⁰ The application called for in Stuart’s step six will eventually go a long way in helping the exegete discern the author’s intended meaning of the biblical text.

The third author who contributes to this review of basic biblical exegesis is Gordon Fee. Fee is professor of New Testament at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. Like Chisholm and Stuart, Fee has a method for helping practitioners do basic biblical exegesis. His process is by far the most detailed. Fee’s initial six or seven steps are nearly a duplication of Chisholm and Stuart. However, Fee separates himself from the other men by adding four more steps to his method than Chisholm’s seven-step method. He refers to these steps as “Moving from Exegesis to Sermon.”¹¹ One can see how the work of basic biblical exegesis pays off with Fee’s method. For example, Fee begins this section by assuring exegetes that their hard work in the passage to this point has not been in vain. He says, “What you have been doing to this point is not the sermon itself. You have been discovering the meaning of the text in terms of its original intent.”¹² Now that one is on firm footing in terms of grasping the meaning of the text, in the next step, Fee calls for the student to engage in prayerful reflection of the passage. He follows that up in step eight with determining the main points of the biblical text that need to be proclaimed. As he continues in step eight, Fee offers that what follows next is purpose. Purpose decides how the points will be applied. And the last subsection in step eight is

⁹ Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis*, 72.

¹⁰ Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis*, 72.

¹¹ Gordon Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors* (Louisville, KY: Westminster, 2002), 151.

¹² Fee, *New Testament Exegesis*, 151.

response. Here Fee is concerned with what the preacher hopes to achieve with the sermon.

In step nine, practitioners decide on the introduction and conclusion. Step ten follows that with constructing an outline. Finally, in step eleven preachers are asked to construct the sermon. After pupils have engaged in the rigorous and demanding task of biblical exegesis, they must turn their focus to determining the Big Idea. In the next section we will be introduced to six men who are well-respected for their contributions in this field.

Haddon Robinson is the undisputed grandfather of Big Idea preaching. His seminal work *Biblical Preaching* led a generation of homiletics to preach the Big Idea. He defines the Big Idea in two parts. First, in his definition of expository preaching, Robinson says that expository preaching is “the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context.”¹³ In other words, there can be no Big Idea without first locating a biblical concept, which is derived from the complete study of a specific passage. Next, in order to be certain that one has accurately identified the intended meaning of the author, Robinson maintains that the practitioner is required to determine the subject and complement of the passage. He insists that “both are necessary.”¹⁴ He further argues, “When we talk about the subject of an idea, we mean the complete, definite answer to the question, ‘What am I talking about?’”¹⁵ In short, the subject asks the question, and “the

¹³ Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 21.

¹⁴ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 41.

¹⁵ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 41.

complement completes the subject by answering the question, ‘What I am saying about what I am talking about.’”¹⁶

It is difficult to imagine how any sermon can be effective without a big concept that is confirmed by its underlying subject and complement. Perhaps that is why Robinson also posited that “effective sermons major in biblical ideas brought together into an overarching unity.”¹⁷ Last, Robinson offers a caution to expositors about the importance of how practitioners ought to approach the Bible. He posits, “In our approach to the Bible, therefore, we are primarily concerned not with what individual words mean, but with what the biblical writers mean through their use of words.”¹⁸ Robinson continues, “If we desire to understand the Bible in order to communicate its message, we must grapple with it on the level of ideas.”¹⁹

It is important to realize that Robinson did not invent the practice of making the sermon proclaim a single idea. He himself stood on the shoulders of expositors from previous generations such as Harry Bauman, John A. Broadus, George Buttrick, Henry Grady Davis, P. T. Forsyth, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, J. H. Jowett, G. Campbell Morgan, and W. E. Sangster, to name few. Again, as I have previously stated, Robinson did not invent the concept of a text possessing a main idea; he popularized and extended the concept and made it part of the vocabulary and practice of most evangelical homileticians in the late twentieth century. Others who have followed Robinson are Walter Kaiser, Donald Sunukjian, Scott Gibson, and Randal Pelton.

¹⁶ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 41.

¹⁷ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 39.

¹⁸ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 23.

¹⁹ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 23.

Henry Grady Davis was a predecessor of Robinson in the field of expository preaching. In his classic book *Design for Preaching*, Davis maintains, “A complete idea is a complete thought expressed in a complete sentence with subject and predicate.”²⁰ He further argues that individual words themselves are important only to preserve the sense of the organism. In other words, what brings significance to individual words is their relationship to the whole or completed thought. Davis and Robinson agree on this concept. Davis proposes asking the text two questions, as does Robinson. Davis argues, “The first points to the true subject, what is actually being talked about.”²¹ He goes on to say, “Until a subject is exactly defined, it is not possible either to understand or judge the value of anything said.”²² In Davis’s paradigm, “the second question, completely answered, supplies in condensed form the full body of predication everything the speaker or writer is saying.”²³ For Davis, it is the combining of these two elements that comprises the development of the organic structure. In short, one does not stand without the other.

Although Robinson and Davis do not use identical terminology, nevertheless it is accurate to say the two men agree. In other words, despite Davis calling the subject and predicate the central idea, and Robinson advocating that the subject and the complement amount to the Big Idea, both men are making the same point. A central idea has two parts: a complete subject that expresses what is being talked about, and its complete complement which answers the question of what is being said about what is being talked about.

²⁰ Henry Grady Davis, *Design for Preaching* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1958), 22.

²¹ Davis, *Design for Preaching*, 22.

²² Davis, *Design for Preaching*, 24.

²³ Davis, *Design for Preaching*, 25.

Walter Kaiser is not only a contemporary of Robinson's but also a highly regarded practitioner. He makes a significant contribution on the subject. In *Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament*, Kaiser addresses the issue of the sermon needing unity. He holds that the focal point of a passage is where one will find the focal point.²⁴ Kaiser's concept of the focal point is the equivalent to Robinson's Big Idea. In either case, both would agree that this is the unifying factor which allows a sermon to cohere. It also keeps the preacher from wandering and getting off track, a practice that ultimately will lose the audience. This is an issue this writer is too familiar with; yet, because of resources such as Kaiser's book, I have been able to correct that issue.

Another significant contributor to the subject of Big Idea preaching is Donald Sunukjian. Sunukjian follows Robinson in that he agrees that in developing an understanding of the biblical text, exegetes must begin with the intent of the original inspired author. He argues, "The goal of the passage outline is to identify the author's 'big hunk' ideas and show how they progressively unfold through the passage." However, Sunukjian differs from Robinson in that he begins his process with a passage outline and then extends the meaning of the passage by transforming the language from a historical expression into one that is theological. He calls this the timeless truth. While there are obvious differences, the two men again find agreement on the need for a final stage of developing the author's original concept into an idea that can be preached. Robinson calls this the "Homiletical Idea," while Sunukjian prefers to call it the "Take-Home Truth."²⁵ Nevertheless, both Robinson and Sunukjian are ultimately concerned

²⁴ Kaiser, *Preaching and Teaching*, 55.

²⁵ Donald R. Sunukjian, *Biblical Preaching: Proclaiming Truth with Clarity and Relevance* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2007), 65.

about identifying, clarifying, and expressing the concept that the original writer had in mind and then forwarding that idea into the hearts and minds of today's hearers.

Scott Gibson follows Robinson's method and philosophy of Big Idea preaching without much variation. Gibson is a former student of Robinson. In *The Big Idea of Preaching*, Gibson, like Robinson and Sunukjian, begins with the exegetical idea. Like Robinson, though, he maintains that the Big Idea is comprised of the subject and complement. He raises an important point about how practitioners must be concerned not only about capturing the Big Idea as a single concept but also must be aware of the writer's flow of thought in order to connect with today's listeners. Gibson says, "Another way the preacher connects with listeners is by capturing the biblical author's flow of thought. When a preacher wrestles with the text and appreciates the biblical author's progression of ideas, and then comes to an understanding of the listeners' questions, the preacher can determine the flow of the sermon."²⁶

Another former student of Robinson and contributor on the concept of the Big Idea is Randal Pelton.²⁷ Pelton builds on the work of Robinson by extending the concept of the Big Idea to include more theological analysis. He enlightens the learner on how to become more accurate in biblical interpretation. Pelton's first contribution in the area of interpreting the text comes through what he calls "Carefully Cutting the Text." This concept is uniquely Pelton's. In *Preaching with Accuracy*, he describes cutting the text in the following way. "Cutting the Text describes the action of selecting your preaching portion, how much of the Bible you intend to preach for a sermon. Preaching with greater

²⁶ Keith Willhite and Scott M. Gibson, eds., *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching: Connecting the Bible to People* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 164.

²⁷ Randal E. Pelton, "Teaching the Skills of Preaching: Merging the Needs of Practitioners with the Goals of Professors" (DMin thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA, 1996).

accuracy involves understanding how your selection of Text affects interpretation and application.”²⁸ This is important for practitioners to grasp, because as Pelton rightly points out, “Each time you select an amount of scripture to preach on a given Sunday, you are implying that the preaching portion is able to stand alone.”²⁹

Additionally, I find Pelton to be generous in supplying examples all along the way to show how meaning develops throughout the process of interpretation. In other words, not only does he provide instruction on locating the Big Idea; he also expands on Robinson’s concept by suggesting that practitioners begin by locating the “textual big idea.” This is what Robinson calls the “exegetical idea” or the author’s intended meaning. Next, the student identifies the “contextual big idea,” which calls for him to revise the textual big idea by considering it in light of the broader context of the book under consideration. Robinson has nothing in his methodology like this. Pelton does not stop there, however. He insists that if we are going to truly be accurate to the Bible, we must also locate the “canonical big idea.” This is the idea that God, the original Author, has made plain throughout the Bible a given subject. Pelton’s final step in his process is comparable to Robinson’s Homiletical Idea and Sunukjian’s Take-Home Truth. However, Pelton expresses the concept as the Homiletical Big Idea or HomBI.

The Purpose of the Sermon

After locating the Big Idea, one must press on to determine the purpose of a sermon. I will compare several authors who have led the way on dealing with purpose in preaching. Among these writers are: Jay Adams, who is renown as a scholar and teacher

²⁸ Randal E. Pelton, *Preaching with Accuracy: Finding Christ-Centered Big Ideas for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2014), 47.

²⁹ Pelton, *Preaching with Accuracy*, 47.

of preaching, Henry Mitchell is a giant in the field of preaching, especially black preaching. Moreover, he has written extensively on the subject. Finally, Bryan Chapell too has written a complete work that focuses in the preparation of sermons.

First, Jay Adams says that “purpose is the central issue.”³⁰ He believes that entire congregations are aimless and confused due to preaching that lacks purpose. As a result, Adams argues, “the amazing lack of concern for purpose among homiletics and preachers has spawned a brood of preachers who are dull, lifeless, abstract, and impersonal; it has obscured the truth, hindered joyous Christian living, destroyed dedication and initiative and stifled service for Christ.”³¹ Adams also maintains that with so much emphasis on big ideas, topics, and themes, most preachers are so grossly unaware of the centrality of purpose that their thinking has been deflected into wrong channels, which has degraded preaching so that it is little more than a lecture. He argues that preaching should be “the life-transforming experience that God intended it to be.”³² Furthermore, Adams maintains that preachers must adopt “the purpose of the Holy Spirit underlying the biblical preaching portion.”³³

Like Adams, Henry Mitchell believes that a sermon’s purpose comes out of the biblical text. Mitchell says, “The purpose should embody the action demanded by the biblical text.”³⁴ He also suggests, “The challenge is to convert a negative motivating idea to a positive behavioral purpose that flows out of the text.”³⁵ This is not a minor point for a practitioner to consider. If the purpose of the author and therefore the Holy Spirit differs

³⁰ Jay E. Adams, *Preaching with Purpose: The Urgent Task of Homiletics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982), 2.

³¹ Adams, *Preaching with Purpose*, 1.

³² Adams, *Preaching with Purpose*, 2.

³³ Adams, *Preaching with Purpose*, 2.

³⁴ Henry H. Mitchell, *Celebration and Experience in Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon. 1990), 53.

³⁵ Mitchell, *Celebration and Experience in Preaching*, 53.

from the purpose of the preacher, the resulting consequence would be a sermon that is being preached to hearers that lacks the intended conviction which is brought by the Holy Spirit. This kind of peaching cannot be tolerated. Perhaps that is why Mitchell points out that “the almost universal first urge is to say that purpose is ‘to show,’ but at the center it is inadequate.”³⁶ What Mitchell is referring to here are sermons that merely tell people about God’s love or power, without inviting people to go a step further in order to experience the transformative difference that God’s love or power can have on one’s life. Herein lies the difference between Mitchell and Adams. Mitchell goes further than Adams in explaining why purpose must be based in the biblical text and then how the intended purpose of the text ought to effect behavioral change. To that point, Mitchell concludes, “It is those aspects of personality where faith is resident, and where behavior is the fruit, which require the most work.”³⁷ He goes on to say, “To make a sermon logical is easy; to give it impact experientially takes far more skill and imagination, as well as the aid of the Holy Spirit.”³⁸ Adams’s final statement about purpose underscores the indispensable role it plays throughout a sermon. He says, “I am convinced that purpose is of such vital importance to all a preacher does that it ought to control his thinking and actions from start to finish in the preparation and delivery of sermons.”³⁹

Bryan Chapell sees the vital role that purpose plays throughout the sermon process as well. Yet, he also contributes a concept that differs from Adams but is similar to what Mitchell understands about how the Holy Spirit directs the purpose of a sermon to effect behavioral change. In his landmark work, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, Chapell

³⁶ Mitchell, *Celebration and Experience in Preaching*, 54.

³⁷ Mitchell, *Celebration and Experience in Preaching*, 54.

³⁸ Mitchell, *Celebration and Experience in Preaching*, 54.

³⁹ Adams, *Preaching with Purpose*, 1.

posits the concept of the Fallen Condition Focus (FCF). This helps students of preaching be aware that the purpose for preaching a given text must be about God's recognition and solution for the fallen human condition. To this end, Chapell postulates, "FCF not only provides the context needed for a passage's explanation but also indicates that biblical solutions must be divine and not merely human."⁴⁰

Alongside the FCF, Chapell additionally sheds light on the value of using the double helix. A double helix refers to the balance in exposition of a given sermon, specifically, the balance between explanation, illustration, and application. It is important to skillfully intertwine these components within a sermon so that the FCF or purpose of the passage directly hits the intended target and impales the listeners' hearts at the point of application. He argues that "preachers have only a few minutes each week to expound what a passage means. How do they choose what to say? Application answers by forcing them to determine what information most strongly supports particular responses of listeners in light of the FCF of the message."⁴¹ He continues, "The application points to the FCF, saying, this is what you must do about that problem, need, or fault on the basis of what this passage means."⁴² The FCF and the double helix, while not identified in this way by Mitchell, seem to achieve the outcome Mitchell seeks to achieve with the purpose. As a result, the FCF and double helix are powerful tools that must be employed by preachers today.

Once one has achieved the goal of locating the central idea, which insures the unity of the sermon and has established the direction of the sermon through the purpose

⁴⁰ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005), 50.

⁴¹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 212.

⁴² Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 212.

(which follows the intention of author and Holy Spirit guiding the biblical text), he must then consider how that message is to be arranged. We call that outlining. In the next section we will discuss how several practitioners' approach this topic.

Outlining the Sermon

Nearly every book on preaching includes a section on outlining. However, in my estimation, students of all levels should read Dennis Cahill, Henry Grady Davis, Bryan Chapell, and Donald Sunukjian. Closely reading each of these texts will result in students gleaning a great harvest. Why these books? Why these authors specifically? Haddon Robinson best articulates why I have come to highly regard the contributions of these four men and have therefore chosen to review their work in this section. He postulates, "Discussions of outlining usually emphasize the place of Roman and Arabic numerals along with proper indentation, but these factors (important as they are) may ignore the obvious—an outline is the shape of the sermon idea, and the parts must all be related to the whole."⁴³

Outlining is an important step in sermon development. In fact, in *The Shape of Preaching* Dennis Cahill argues, "Without a good structure, the sermon process cannot proceed."⁴⁴ For Cahill, sermon outlining is the second step in the sermon process. Moreover, this step springs out of the Big Idea and the sermon's purpose. These allow the practitioner to form his thoughts into a cohesive whole. As a result, the sermon will be enabled to move from focus into form. An important nugget to learn from Cahill is that the form of a sermon is critical to listener response. He maintains, "A sermon that begins

⁴³ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 34.

⁴⁴ Dennis M. Cahill, *The Shape of Preaching: Theory and Practice in Sermon Design* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 104.

as a story may cue its listeners to sit back and listen to the story unfold. A sermon that starts with ‘I want to share with you four reasons why . . . ’ may cause the listener to take out a pen and prepare to take notes.”⁴⁵ His point is that the response of the hearers is largely preconditioned through cultural influences which cue the listeners how they ought to react to specific occasions such as a wedding, a funeral, a joke, or a riddle. Wise homileticians must take heed because some forms hold the interest of the audience better than others.

While Davis does not disagree with Cahill, he offers a different perspective on outlining a sermon. In *Design for Preaching*, Davis insists that “the proper design of a sermon is a movement in time. It begins at a given moment, it ends at a given moment, and it moves through the intervening moments one after another.” He goes on to say, “A sermon is a continuity of sounds, looks, gestures, which follow one another in time.” Davis rejects the idea of a sermon being a manuscript. Instead, he sees sermons as being like a musical score. They are a work of art. This is an important distinction, because of what Davis calls the hearing situation. He argues, “The only design useful to the listener is a design he can grasp through his ears, an audible movement of thought.”⁴⁶ What Davis intends is that if an outline is to have any utility for the hearer, it must be simple. He adds, “It must have only a few structural divisions or points. Each of these divisions must begin perceptively in time, run its course, and come to an end in time.”⁴⁷ Last, for Davis the ultimate test of a good outline is not that it stands up under re-examination and analysis, because that is a given for every sermon. Rather, Davis argues, “Nothing can be excellent about it which does not come through clearly the first and only time my listener

⁴⁵ Cahill, *Shape of Preaching*, 106.

⁴⁶ Davis, *Design for Preaching*, 165.

⁴⁷ Davis, *Design for Preaching*, 165.

will hear it.”⁴⁸ Davis feels strongly that if he and therefore practitioners can accomplish this goal in the listeners’ memory, he will be able to retain the thoughts being presented as one thought moves from point to point and the design will grow in the minds of the audience as well.

Chapell also provides an in-depth examination of the topic. He, like Cahill, sees the outline being guided by the central idea and purpose, which spring directly from the text. In fact, in *Christ-Centered Preaching*, Chapell goes into more depth on the subject than the scope of this paper allows. Therefore, for the purposes of this review, I have focused his treatment of outlining to what he specifically says about basic outline form. One quite helpful nugget that Chapell posits is “F-O-R-M.” This stands for “*Faithful* to the text, *Obvious* from the text, *Related* to the Fallen Condition Focus, *Moving* toward a climax.”⁴⁹ By using this basic tool for outlining the passage under consideration, he believes that students will represent the Scripture and strike the heart with precision and authority.⁵⁰

Sunukjian, like Cahill and Chapell, is concerned that the outline remain faithful to the text. He suggests, “A good passage outline anchors you to the text, but it is not usually something you can preach.”⁵¹ Sunukjian’s *Biblical Preaching* offers tremendous insights on the subject and goes so far as to suggest that practitioners have a need to develop three separate and distinct outlines before one is ready to preach. This is different from Chapell’s F-O-R-M, which is one simple outline that one uses as a plumb line. Instead, Sunukjian maintains that one’s work merely begins with the “Passage Outline.”

⁴⁸ Davis, *Design for Preaching*, 168.

⁴⁹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 162.

⁵⁰ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 162.

⁵¹ Sunukjian, *Biblical Preaching*, 50.

To be clear, for Sunukjian, the passage outline is essentially the outline of the original author and focuses on words and records events that have happened. This is not like Davis's concept of an outline being a musical score by any means. From this standpoint, it seems that Davis and Sunikjian do not agree, as Sunukjian's outlining process seems to resemble a manuscript rather than a musical score. Next, Sunukjian's "Truth Outline" tells what happens to God's people and how God deals with his people. This outline focuses on what happens in a general and universal way. Finally, the "Sermon Outline" is for today's listener and focuses on what is currently happening in our lives. It is timeless yet contemporary. However, it is my belief that when students have already discovered the exegetical Idea, which is the historical truth, and when they state that truth into the Homiletical Big Idea, the Truth Outline becomes redundant. Therefore, the student of basic exegesis receives the greatest benefit from Sunukjian's material by learning to develop the passage outline and then the sermon outline. In this case, a Sunukjian outline would look very much like Robinson's suggested method of outlining.

Just as locating the Big Idea is indispensable in providing the sermon's unity, the purpose is tantamount to yielding the focus and aim of a sermon. The unifying theme and purpose help to build an outline that supplies a sermon with the structure it needs. The flow of thought which the outline yields demands a proper conclusion. In the final section of this literature review, we will discuss how vital the conclusion is to bring the appropriate closure to a sermon.

The Conclusion

Three authors have provided the most important discussions on concluding the sermon: John Stott, Henry Mitchell, and Bryan Chapell. While each brings his own unique flair to the subject, all agree that the conclusion of a sermon means more than quitting.

Stott believes that writing a conclusion is even more difficult than writing an introduction. In fact, Stott feels strongly that the conclusion's effectiveness or ineffectiveness makes or breaks the entire message. Stott has three valuable assessments about conclusions. First he asserts that conclusions are not merely recapitulations of what one has said previously in the body of the message. He is not against repetition; in fact, he supports the preacher telling the audience what he going to tell them, then telling them what he set out to tell them, and telling them what he already told them! However, he feels even more strongly that information itself cannot and will not cause a person to have a change in heart. Second, in *Between Two Worlds* Stott suggests, "Our expectation, then, as the sermon comes to an end, is not merely that people will understand or remember or enjoy our teaching, but that they will do something about it."⁵² Early in my own career in the pulpit ministry, I labored hard to identify the Big Idea, which unifies the message, only to find that I had dropped the ball during the conclusion, believing that I had done my job if I had gotten hearers to understand what the doctrine said. Stott is right: a message that only explains and does not ask, indeed, demand that listeners do something, is no more than theory. He argues, "We are out to storm the citadel of the

⁵² John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 246.

will, and capture it for Jesus Christ.”⁵³ Finally Stott proposes that in order to preach truly effective conclusions, one must picture the congregation and allow his or her mind to wander across various persons there, considering specific situations and the truth the Scriptures applies to individuals who need to hear the message.⁵⁴

Henry Mitchell, in *Black Preaching*, addresses how he feels black preachers end a sermon. Mitchell does not call the end of the sermon a conclusion. Rather, he suggests that the end of a sermon must be a climax. Chapell agrees. In fact, Chapell argues that “because all a sermon components should have prepared for this culmination, a conclusion is the climax of a message.”⁵⁵ In *Celebration and Experience in Preaching*, Mitchell additionally offers, “Instead of simply winding down and taking a seat, the preacher-performing artist engages in a final, triumphant or celebrative expression of the theme or resolution of the conflict or issue.”⁵⁶ Additionally, Mitchell sees two important proposals for black preachers during the sermon’s wrap-up. First, he maintains that black preachers must not fall into the trap of “serving beef dinner and then drowning the beef in chicken gravy.”⁵⁷ This metaphor is profound. In short, Mitchell warns that black preachers must be sure that the same point being emphasized in the body of the message is the very material that is used in the climax. His point is, “The unforgettable aspect of the sermon may thus become the relatively meaningless movement or vision, while the real lesson is crowded off the stage of memory!”⁵⁸

⁵³ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 248.

⁵⁴ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 252.

⁵⁵ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 253.

⁵⁶ Mitchell, *Celebration and Experience in Preaching*, 61.

⁵⁷ Henry H. Mitchell, *Black Preaching* (Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott, 1970), 189.

⁵⁸ Mitchell, *Black Preaching*, 193.

Second, Mitchell sees the climax in black preaching as being the emotional celebration. Mitchell again finds agreement with Chapell regarding celebrating during the conclusion. Chapell maintains that “thought and emotion should arrive at their greatest height and most personal statement in the conclusion.”⁵⁹ While Mitchell enjoys celebrating the truth of the gospel to conclude a sermon, his second caution is especially to untrained preachers, who will search for climactic material in an effort to manipulate the response of God’s people but neglect their duty to properly prepare themselves to execute a marrying together of what he calls the embrace and celebration. Mitchell argues, “In the black climax at its best, the idea—the point which has been made—is embraced and celebrated. It is, as it were, burned into the consciousness of the hearer. Embrace and celebration are emotional. And a good black climax will appeal to the highest and noblest emotion of a man, whether black or white.”⁶⁰

We have explored the importance of locating the Big Idea and how the purpose answers the reason the audience needs to engage in hearing a sermon. We have similarly evaluated books that looked at how the Big Idea adds unity in preaching, and then we considered resources that examined the need to develop a basic sermon outline. Last, we wrapped up this chapter with a review of the sermon conclusion. In the next chapter of the thesis, I will discuss the project design.

⁵⁹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 255.

⁶⁰ Mitchell, *Black Preaching*, 194.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROJECT DESIGN

Having looked at the problem in the urban setting in chapter 1, we learned that even today, many bi-vocational ministers there are still not trained how to do basic biblical exegesis. Next, I laid out a theological framework for preaching and teaching in chapter 2. This was followed by a literature review of the pertinent material which informed the research of this project in chapter 3. However, this chapter now turns to the heart of this thesis-project, the project design. My project design consisted of five parts.

Stage One: Initial Survey

The goal was to train urban bi-vocational preachers in basic biblical exegesis. In order to accomplish this task, I conducted a survey on August 21 of a group of twenty bi-vocational lay leaders, with the help of Jeffrey Waldorf, a research librarian from Fuller Theological Seminary, who graciously volunteered his time and guided me in crafting six questions that were posed to my audience. This survey was designed to ascertain the level of interest participants in this group had in receiving training in basic biblical exegesis and to find out how much experience participants already had in this area.

When I initially reported the results of this survey I said that the survey revealed that only two of the twenty participants of the group could articulate what basic exegesis meant. However, after re-examining students' answers, I may have been a bit harsh in assessing their answers. Now, I would say that nineteen of the twenty articulated what basic exegesis meant; but only one individual among this group of church leaders had

received prior training in basic exegesis (see Appendix 1). For example, question one of the survey asked, “What is basic exegesis?” The most common answer to the question was “The ability to extract meaning from the text.” However, another student answered that basic exegesis is “to be able to speak about the word, what the text is saying.” And another student gave a quite surprising answer to this question when he answered that basic exegesis “is the Book of Acts.”

I was most encouraged by how practitioners answered part three of question three, which asked, “What impact this training would have on your ministry?” One student replied, “This is important for congregants who may relate to me and my testimony and Scripture.” Another said, “It will give more direction of the message and to give clarity to the receiver of the message.” A final participant said, “It would have a great impact because I’m called by God to make disciples, and a part of discipling is being able to impart His word correctly.” The take-away for me here was that these practitioners demonstrated that they are also willing to take the necessary steps to address the weaknesses that painfully exist in their awareness.

This pain became quite obvious to me through the massive reluctance of many to share the results of their surveys. The vast majority of learners who were surveyed would not give me permission to publish their surveys here. Despite assuring them that their names would not be disclosed, they overwhelmingly expressed that they were uncomfortable with the thought that their answers would be published in this project.

Stage Two: Observation of Preaching

Second, a month later, on September 20 and September 27, I observed the same twenty bi-vocational leaders preach a live sermon at the West Campus of Light and Life Christian Fellowship, in Long Beach, California. My goal was twofold. On the one hand, I wanted to establish the skill level of my audience in locating the Big Idea of the passage. The first Tuesday evening, I listened to ten participants preach the same portion of Scripture that had been assigned to everyone (Luke 19:1-10). On the other hand, the next ten participants that preached the following Tuesday evening gave me an opportunity to hear each student preach from the aforementioned text. Even though Luke 19:1-10 was assigned to all participants, four of the twenty selected a different passage to preach. While I allowed them to participate anyway, I now realize that doing so may have been a mistake on my part because it compromised the statistical data of my survey. Even with the benefit of being allowed to preach from a passage they felt more comfortable with, these pupils still missed the point of their passage. What I learned here not only validated much of what I suspected originally, but also it took me by surprise that sixteen of the twenty participants preached messages that missed the author's Big Idea entirely, although they made statements that came out of the Bible. Moreover, only two preached a sermon that correctly identified the author's intended idea, which was expressed by the subject of that text and its complement. I determined this by using Robinson's method of locating the subject of a passage and using the complement to give a complete answer to the question(s) of the text. This experience gave me a clear indication that there is work to be done with this audience.

Additionally, before they engaged in the preaching exercise, each was asked to identify the subject and complement of the assigned passage and turn in those survey sheets (again see Appendix 1). The results of this preaching survey further underscores the immediate need to train bi-vocational ministers to do basic biblical exegesis, which is what I argued in chapter 1. My thesis maintains “that by providing training to bi-vocational ministers to do basic biblical exegesis in urban Los Angeles churches, an untapped resource will be empowered and become of significant benefit to many churches throughout Los Angeles.” I also maintain, however, that not providing this essential training will have an equally profound effect on the church.

A final discovery during this project was even more alarming than those previously listed. That discovery came when asked how many ideas a good sermon should raise, these practitioners unanimously said three to four ideas. Furthermore, preachers who misidentified the subject also fabricated complements. And without exception, during the course of their sermons, each abandoned the text that he originally announced. As a consequence, their preaching tended to hopscotch from one Scripture to another Scripture in order to support their idea. The danger I discovered here was imposing a meaning on the text. Randy Pelton contends that

class after class of pastors has confirmed one thing to me: most of us do not let the biblical Text speak for itself. Over and over again we seem to impose meaning on the biblical Text, a kind of *impository* preaching as opposed to *expository* preaching. We do this largely because we haven’t paid close enough attention or respected the structure of the selected preaching portion. We don’t pay enough attention to the way in which meanings are developed by the author.¹

¹ Randal E. Pelton, “Teaching the Skills of Preaching: Merging the Needs of Practitioners with the Goals of Professors” (DMin thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA, 1996), chapter 4, 1.

The gravity of Pelton's statement along with witnessing this startling discovery further convinced me about the immediate necessity of equipping these servants of God with the basic tools for expository preaching and teaching.

Since proclamation is the divinely ordained method of communicating the gospel to people everywhere, as I argued in chapter 2, anyone who desires to preach or teach the Scriptures must be trained to become a diligent student of the craft by others who have previously received training to preach and teach the Scriptures. In 2 Timothy 4, the apostle Paul argues this point:

Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instructions. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. (2 Tim 4:1-5)

This passage points out the tremendous burden and lofty expectations of those who are tasked with preaching the Word. Despite the obvious arduous struggle he has in mind that the preacher will go through, and having to live in a society that prefers to be entertained, nevertheless, the apostle intimates regardless of one's immediate situation, it is always a good time to preach the gospel. Therefore, preachers must be prepared for the task.

Stage Three: Handbook for Basic Biblical Exegesis

The third component of my project design was the construction of a "Handbook for Basic Biblical Exegesis" (see Appendix 2). The manual is an abbreviation of Haddon Robinson's ten stages in developing an expository sermon. However, because time was limited for my training events, it was not feasible for me to explore each of Robinson's

stages. Therefore, at a later time, I will develop another training course for advanced students of the craft. I truncated Robinson's ten stages by omitting "Filling in the Sermon" and "Introductions." Again, I left these subjects out not because I felt that they were unimportant; but rather due to their weightiness and because two days is too short a period of time to cover so much material.

Stage Four: Two-Day Seminar

In the fourth stage of my project design, I facilitated a two-day seminar in basic biblical exegesis. This seminar was conducted twice. Both seminars were held at the Los Angeles Community Church, in Los Angeles, California, during consecutive Monday evenings.

Session 1 of the seminar addressed the topic of selecting a passage for preaching and discovering the Big Idea. The primary focus was on locating the subject and complement of a preaching portion, which is the Big Idea or the TexBI that is derived out of the original writer's idea from the historical context. Another feature of this session was demonstrating to students how to restate the Textual Big Idea as a Homiletical Big Idea, or the HomBI. A third part of this session targeted how to identify the purpose of a sermon, which is also called the burden of the passage or Fallen Condition Focus (FCF).

The extra components of this training were implemented because I became overly focused on having enough material to teach during the two days. This resulted in me expecting too much from my students and myself.

The second session of the seminar was structuring an outline for the passage. Here we took into consideration how to structure a textual outline of the historical passage and

transition it into a homiletical outline that addresses the contemporary audience. (The lesson plans for the seminar are found in Appendix 3.) Here are some samples from the objectives for the two sessions:

First Seminar: Training in Basic Exegetical Skills

Welcome and Prayer

Time: 2 hours

Objectives: At the end of this seminar, the student should be able to (a) identify the preaching portion, also known as a unit of Scripture, and (b) state the dominant or main idea of that unit using the subject and complement and (c) state the dominant idea or big idea in its concise historical language, then in its contemporary form.

Note: The teaching strategy in each seminar follows the same format: lecture, use of PowerPoint to illustrate, and feedback. Students therefore are encouraged to feel free to request clarification or explanation at any time.

In this lecture I shared my basic assumptions and presuppositions about preaching and the reason I believe students should take this course. These basic assumptions are:

- Preaching has been and will continue to be the divinely ordained and primary method of communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Effective preaching rests primarily on the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, who exerts his influence upon both the preacher and the hearers.
- Anyone can be taught to improve his communication skills.
- It is the responsibility of the believing community to prepare and train other believers in the communication of the gospel.

How to Select a Passage

To select an appropriate biblical passage, identify a unit of Scripture that contains a subject and its complete complement, which fully answers the question that the subject is asking explicitly or implicitly in the text.

Class Exercise (5 minutes)

Start by asking students to identify some problems that make listening to sermons difficult. The purpose of this exercise is to show that there is a need for sermons to have one dominant idea, a clear reason for the audience to continue to listen, and an order by which it progresses. As a result, the need will be provided to introduce the Big Idea method.

Stage 1—Selecting Your Passage (Lecture, 20-25 minutes)

A unit of Scripture is any passage which can stand on its own. It must also be placed in its historical and grammatical context. For example, in the case of Old Testament narratives, units of Scripture would be stories which have a beginning, a sequence of events, and a conclusion. These are fairly obvious, for the biblical writers clearly wanted to convey certain episodes in the lives of the patriarchs or prophets in which they showed how God revealed his plan and purpose in their lives. In the case of the prophecies, or prophetic literature, the prophets usually announce beforehand the application of their utterances. In the case of the Psalms, most are a unit and should be treated as a whole. In the Gospels, units of Scripture are identified as episodes, events, and or teachings

(whether by parables or direct discourse) of Jesus. In the Epistles, units are more fluid in their boundaries. One has to be aware that the writers had a specific purpose in writing their letters and that the entire epistle can be thought of as a unit, but for preaching purposes they can be broken down into those passages where the author is addressing a particular topic. It is also important to note that in biblical preaching the text becomes the material fabric to woven into a sermon. When we declare a text from the pulpit or teach it from a lectern, what follows should reflect that specific biblical passage in it points, themes, and message. It should be clear to the audience that the scriptural passage is the foundation of the sermon or teaching. Here are some ways to choose a text from a biblical passage.

- A. Personal Study or Bible Reading Plan
- B. Needs of the Congregation
- C. Book of the Bible or Series
- D. Church Calendar
- E. Lectionary

Second Seminar: Constructing an Outline

Time: 2 hours

Objective: After this seminar, the student should be able to construct a textual outline and a homiletical outline of an assigned unit of Scripture.

Text: Psalm 1

Subject: Why it makes a difference how you live?

Complement: How you live will determine where you end up.

TexBI: How you live matters, because how you live determines where you end up!

HomBI: Paying attention to your life now pays dividends in eternity!

Purpose: To encourage God's people to be watchful of their daily behavior

Textual Outline

I. The blessed (truly happy) person is one who orders his life

he does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly

he one who does not stand in the path of sinners

he does not sit in the seat of the scornful

II. The blessed man is one who takes delight in the law of the Lord

in this law he meditates day and night

III. The blessed man is like a tree well nourished

he will bring forth fruit in due time

his leaf shall not wither

whatever he does shall prosper.

By contrast, the ungodly are not blessed

they are like chaff which the wind drives away

they will not be able to stand in the judgment

nor assemble with the righteous

Conclusion: The Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly will perish.

Homiletical Outline

I. The blessed (truly happy) person is one who establishes godly priorities in his life

he is known by the company he does not keep

he is known by his delight in God's Word

II. The blessed person will experience an abundant life

it will be a life of fruitfulness

it will be a life of constant refreshing

it will be a life of true prosperity

III. By contrast, ungodly persons will live lives that come to a tragic end

in the end, their life will be found to be superficial

they will not pass the test of God's judgement

they cannot fellowship with God's people

Conclusion: The Lord knows how you are living. How are you living your life? How you live now has consequences both for this life and in the judgment to come.

Stage Five: Post-Seminar Survey

The final stage in my project design was a post-seminar survey that was designed with the help of Dr. Bryan Auday (see Appendix 4). The purpose in this section of my project design was to measure the progress of the audience on the subject.

I set out to train bi-vocational preachers in basic biblical exegesis, but I did much more than that. I attempted to squeeze a semester of learning into two two-hour sessions, and I now see that as a weakness of my thesis-project. It was too much to expect these bi-vocational pastors to learn how to locate the author's historical idea, then translate that into a homiletical big idea, digest how to identify and focus the purpose of a sermon, and then outline a passage all in two two-hour sessions.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the results of using the “Handbook for Basic Biblical Exegesis” with bi-vocational ministers over the period of two days, as well as the lessons I learned from conducting the seminars. Additionally, I will talk about how those lessons will affect my ministry, and finally, where that takes me.

CHAPTER FIVE

OUTCOMES

In chapter 4, I reviewed the five parts that make up my project design. Moreover, I briefly discussed how I set out to train bi-vocational preachers in basic biblical exegesis, but I ultimately did much more than that. I concluded that I had asked too much of my audience in just two two-hour sessions. In this final chapter, known as outcomes, I will discuss what I learned as a result of attempting accomplish too much in training bi-vocational ministers in basic biblical exegesis, the benefits and draw-backs with using the “Handbook for Basic Biblical Exegesis,” and finally, I will discuss the impact of the lessons I learned during this project and how those lessons will affect my ministry moving forward.

Lessons Learned

Training bi-vocational preachers requires complete focus on the goal. When focus on the training needs of bi-vocational ministers is lost, the focus will quickly shift to being about the needs of the facilitator. In retrospect, that is what happened with me. The weakness of this project began to manifest in the literature review found in chapter 3. There, I nearly reviewed the entire scope of how to prepare a sermon. As a result, that thinking carried over into the creation of the “Handbook for Basic Biblical Exegesis,” which led to an overly ambitious training agenda for the two-day two-hour seminars. Why did I miss the tactical error in my project design? What effect did this weakness in my project design have on achieving my desired goal of training bi-vocational ministers

in basic biblical exegesis? In the scheme of things, how did participants view the overall training experience? These questions will be answered here.

First, I missed the tactical error in my project design because I became overly concerned about wanting my audience to view me as being knowledgeable in the subject matter. This became obvious as I reflected on the stated goal of this thesis project, which is to train bi-vocational preachers in basic exegesis. In reality, what I attempted to deliver was nearly an entire course on sermon preparation.

Second, hindsight reveals that the focus of the project design became about me meeting my needs. This became apparent to me during the initial two-hour seminar. I saw that my expectations for these practitioners were incredibly overreaching the initial scope of training I had envisioned. Yet, I pushed forward anyway, hoping for the best. This had to have been confusing to my audience, which was expecting to be taught basic tools in hermeneutics. As I look back on this strategy now, I would approach these two seminar trainings much differently today. For example, in the first session I would spend all of my time defining authorial intent or the Big Idea. I would also have us look at video clips of sermons that got the Big Idea right and those that missed the point. I would conclude the last forty-five minutes of the first session with exercises in locating the Textual Big Idea or TextBI, and homework would reemphasize what we set out to learn together in the final forty-five minutes of the first session. The second session would lead off with the first half hour focusing on questions about the previous session, and then questions about the homework and wrap-up with a review of the homework. The next forty-five minutes would target how to translate the TextBI into a Homiletical Big Idea or HomBI through more demonstrations and practice examples. The final half hour would be more

questions, followed by the post-seminar evaluation. I see now that the real issue with me presenting too much material caused me to lose the ability to narrowly focus the training so that participants could focus on learning the Big Idea.

The effect this weakness in my project design had on achieving my desired goal of training bi-vocational ministers in basic biblical exegesis is one that is expressed by participants in their post-seminar evaluations. For example, question ten asks students to “Evaluate the instructor’s ability to convey the material in a way that is understandable. Was he able to answer your questions? Patient covering material? Knowledgeable about the subject?” Nine out of the seventeen respondents replied “very knowledgeable” or “knew what he was talking about.” This was in stark contrast to how respondents answered question nine, which asks, “In what ways has this course been helpful in your skill development in basic biblical exegesis?” Only one out of seventeen answered, “I understand the Textual and Homiletical Big Idea,” which was the reason behind the project design.

In the scheme of things, participants viewed the overall training experience as being quite positive. Moreover, despite the fact that I overtaxed these practitioners with too much material for the short period of time we had together, which arose from the weakness of my project design and therefore the training itself, the survey also indicates that of the seventeen out of twenty-two who completed surveys, this group did indeed get the Big Idea. Questions one and two bear this out as being the truth. Question one asks, “The subject of a biblical passage is?” Three options are listed. All seventeen selected (A.), “What the biblical writer is talking about.” Question two asks, “What is the complement of a biblical passage?” Again, three options were listed, and all seventeen

chose the correct answer (C.), “The complement is what the biblical writer is saying about what he is talking about.” All participants also answered question 5 correctly as false. That question asks, “Is it ever permissible for a preacher or Bible teacher to assign their own meaning to a biblical passage?”

I also found the learning experience from this project both positive and valuable. In fact, teaching these students taught me how much learning and growth has occurred during my tenure in the Preaching Literary Forms Track at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. For example, as I was challenged by the questions students asked during the seminar, I was not only prepared to sufficiently answer the questions but I was also prepared with examples and demonstrations utilizing biblical texts. I was impressed by and learned this technique during my initial year of being enrolled in the track.

An additional nugget that added to my learning during the two-day seminar was anticipating when and where learners ought to have questions. This is especially valuable at the beginning of training when only a few questions are being asked. The wise instructor might ask the question for the audience and be prepared to offer many examples and even practice exercises to reinforce learning among participants.

Finally, I learned that a two-hour block of time for teaching basic biblical exegesis, even when one is only presenting four of Robinson’s ten-step process, is not much time to treat the subject. It is quite possible that one could use that entire block of time to present each of these sections individually in order to produce the most optimal results.

The Benefits and Drawbacks of Using the Handbook

As we have seen, many lessons were learned while designing the project and in the delivery of the same. Now, we will examine the benefits and drawbacks with using the “Handbook for Basic Biblical Exegesis” during the seminar. The handbook was meant to be a resource that students could look to after they had completed the seminars. Specifically, it was my hope that this manual would provide some utility to participants by reminding them how to put to use their new and developing skills in basic biblical exegesis, in order to produce expository messages that honor the author’s intended meaning. While I believe this goal was partly achieved, I also believe that I fell short of fully achieving this goal as a result of trying to accomplish too much in these short sessions. Here again is an example of my objective during the first session:

- First session: Choose a passage and locate its preaching portion. Next, identify the subject and complement of the selected scriptural passage, state the Textual Big Idea, and then restate the Textual Big Idea into a Homiletical Big Idea. Finally, state the purpose of the sermon, through identifying the burden of writer. In other words, tell what fallen human condition has raised the concern of God and desperately invokes the plan of redemption.

The first drawback in using this manual was that I did not deliver a method for doing basic biblical exegesis to the practitioners who attended the seminars. After recognizing this error, I developed a method of doing basic biblical exegesis, with urban black bi-vocational ministers in mind. This method is not completely original. Moreover, it is important for me to acknowledge that doing biblical exegesis is an involved process that requires many more steps than the scope of this project allows. Therefore, for the

purposes of this project and my audience (urban black bi-vocational preachers) I have condensed the process down to four steps. What I attempt with this method is to bring to the forefront what I consider to be the most foundational elements in the exegetical process—in other words, those principles that absolutely demand the exegete’s undivided attention. My aim is to help students to apprehend the author-intended meaning. To simplify this method of doing basic biblical exegesis, I gave it the acronym CIGA. CIGA stands for “Cut the text,” “Identify the structure of the text,” “Grammatical study of the text,” and “Application of the text.” Here is how I see my method being taught in my next seminar.

Four Steps to Basic Biblical Exegesis (CIGA)

“Cut the Text”

Randy Pelton helps all the practitioners in the urban context to begin the process of doing basic biblical exegesis by describing what it means to cut the text. He explains in *Preaching with Accuracy* that “cutting the Text describes the action of selecting your preaching portion, how much of the Bible you intend to preach for a sermon. Preaching with greater accuracy involves understanding how your selection of Text affects interpretation and application.”¹ This is important for practitioners to grasp, because as Pelton rightly points out, “Each time you select an amount of scripture to preach on a given Sunday, you are implying that the preaching portion is able to stand alone.”²

¹ Randal E. Pelton, *Preaching with Accuracy: Finding Christ-Centered Big Ideas for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2014), 47.

² Pelton, *Preaching with Accuracy*, 47.

Where do you begin cutting the text? Start at the beginning! Matthew 22:1-14 is an example of a preaching portion that is able to stand alone. This passage is a parable; we will briefly discuss genre later. However, parables stand alone because they are independent stories. As such they provide context or setting, conflict, body or rising action, a climax, and a conclusion. In other words, when we preach a parable, we have to preach the whole thing. Preaching anything less than that would be preaching an incomplete thought. As students of preaching, we need to preach complete thought units in order to accurately express the author's intended meaning. Pelton again is helpful here when he says, "Whenever you choose to preach somewhere in the middle—in the middle of a chapter, story, or paragraph—go back to the beginning of that chapter, story or paragraph. Then speed read to locate beginnings and endings of potential preaching portions."³ This is good advice. Not following it could lead to what he calls preaching a little idea. Little ideas are those ideas that are present in the text, but as Pelton articulates, "do not possess enough independence to function for the Church apart from its previous context."⁴ Therefore, practitioners, cut the text accurately by choosing texts that are able to stand alone.

"Identify the Structure of the Text"

Identifying the structure involves three things. First, as a good exegete of the passage, one must pay close attention to the genre that writer has chosen to communicate through. A genre is a form of biblical literature. Genres are sometimes represented by stories, which are also known as narratives. Or perhaps you might encounter a genre called poetry. Poetry comes in forms such as psalms, proverbs, or parables. Another

³ Pelton, *Preaching with Accuracy*, 51.

⁴ Pelton, *Preaching with Accuracy*, 49.

category of genre is known as didactic literature. One encounters didactic literature when he reads the epistles. Finally, there are the categories of genre known as visions and prophecy. The importance of knowing what genre the author is communicating through helps the practitioner recognize important clues that distinguish one genre from another. In *The Shape of Preaching*, Dennis Cahill illuminates how preachers signal the intention or purpose of their sermon with opening statements. For example, “a sermon that begins as a story may cue its listeners to sit back and listen to the story unfold. A sermon that starts with ‘I want to share with you four reasons why . . . ’ may cause the listener to take out a pen and prepare to take notes.”⁵ His point is that the response of the hearers is largely preconditioned through cultural influences which cue the listeners how they ought to react to specific occasions such as a wedding, a funeral, a joke, or a riddle. In a very similar way, biblical authors’ use genres which present clues that tip off the exegete as to how to go about the job of interpreting the author’s intended meaning. Good basic biblical exegesis calls for the preacher to heed genre clues that help him interpret the author’s meaning.

A second area that belongs to identifying the structure of the text is discovering how the author arranges or organizes the concepts within the text. Our task here is to identify the major thought blocks or units of the passage. We begin by examining the author’s overall outline of the text. Next, identify what appears to be the major thought unit(s). These are located among many minor ideas that the writer presents in the passage. However, be sure you only identify one dominant idea as the preaching portion for any Sunday morning. The major idea is that concept which as Pelton posits, “controls the

⁵ Dennis M. Cahill, *The Shape of Preaching: Theory and Practice in Sermon Design* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 106.

meaning.”⁶ In other words, it is the idea that possesses enough independence to function for the Church, which means it can stand alone.

Also be sure to investigate any recurring patterns in the text. We need to recognize and understand what significance or truth the author wants us to see or know through a recurring pattern in the passage. Identifying the structure of the text is another vital element that helps practitioners understand what the author meant.

“Grammatical Study of the Text”

Studying the grammar of a biblical passage is the responsibility of every preacher. Yet, today, one does not have to be an expert in Hebrew or Greek to do a solid job of studying the grammar of a biblical passage. Fortunately, there are many Bible software programs available to practitioners and laymen which make studying grammar fairly simple. For example, with many of the software programs one can do a mini word search on one screen and on another have a lexicon open in order to delve into the semantic domain of the key words. Furthermore, Bible software makes it possible to access nearly any resource, such as commentaries, background helps, or books on customs, all at the click of a mouse. Moreover, one can complete the entire exegetical process and see a layout of multiple screens without moving away from the computer.

As I previously mentioned, there exists a myriad of Bible programs for students to consider. Here are two bible software program among the many. The Word Bible software, which comes in a version that is free; and Logos Bible Software, which varies in price based on the resources one that one can afford. Whether one has the free version or the most expensive package money can buy, we must be faithful to the task of studying the grammar of the text.

⁶ Pelton, *Preaching with Accuracy*, 48.

“Application of the Text”

When considering the application of the text, it is important to recognize that we are not talking about the applications of our own sermons yet. Instead, our concern here is to glean how the original writer is applying the text to his hearers. One way we can learn this is through the tone of the text. The tone of the text represents how the theme or primary question about the topic is approached. Additionally, tone shows the attitudes toward the subject and toward the audience. Tone can be formal, informal, condescending, intimate, playful or sarcastic. Tone is different than mood. On one hand, author’s use tone as a part of the application of the text in the following ways: through tone one gains a sense about the occasion, the pace, tempo, intensity of the characters. Additionally, through the writer’s tone, exegetes are able to apprehend the level and quality of interaction between the characters. How one character relates to the other or perhaps does not, goes a long way in aiding practitioners in interpreting meaning in the text.

On the other hand, the mood of the text reveals the feeling or atmosphere of the passage. The mood guides how the author intended for his hearers to feel. How the writer intends his audience to feel is an indicator of how preachers should seek to apply the text in order to evoke a similar response from their audience on Sunday morning.

Furthermore, pay attention to verbs and adjectives here. Verbs and adjective are the parts of speech that the author uses to reveal both tone and mood in the text. Therefore, to pay attention means to look up the meaning of these critical words. This is a highly advisable habit for students to develop. As a result of being faithful here, students will greatly prosper from a yield of the author’s intended meaning.

Another key to learning how the writer is applying the text is to understand the writer's expectation or burden in the text. Understanding how the writer is applying the text will go a long way in help you apply the text in a similar fashion to the people of your congregation.

I hope to empower urban black bi-vocational preachers and teachers by supplying them with a simple method for doing basic biblical exegesis. As a result, my belief is that these preachers will in turn preach and teach more biblically accurate messages that honor the author's intended meaning.

A second drawback of using the manual was it sought to accomplish too much. This led to poor use of the time on my part. Today, I would seek to remedy this issue by reprioritizing my use of time. I think a better use of the time during the first session would be to drop all discussions that focus on anything other than the Big Idea. This would leave room to have more practical discussions about the Big Idea that might leave practitioners with a deeper and perhaps broader understanding surrounding the issue. An example of a topic that could have led into this kind of discussion might have been:

“Knowing the results of impository preaching versus expository preaching.”

Objective: At the end of this session students will be able to (a) recognize the far-reaching impact of imposing your meaning on the biblical passage and (b) understand why using biblical sayings from the Bible to prove your idea is not the Big Idea.

- Students will gather in groups of three to four and review samples of how other students in my previous class imposed their idea on Luke 19:1-10, which resulted in some strange interpretations of this classic passage.

- The class will watch short clips of preachers who properly interpreted Luke 19:1-10.
- For the last fifteen minutes, discuss what produces bad biblical exegesis and what produces good biblical exegesis.

In the end, my next “Handbook for Basic Biblical Exegesis” will be keenly focused on building the skills of identifying the original idea the author of the passage intended, by locating the subject and the complement of the biblical passage. In the last section of outcomes, I will provide a glimpse of the next steps in my ministry as a result of what I learned during this project.

How What I Learned Will Affect My Ministry

In the previous section, we examined the benefits and drawbacks with using the “Handbook for Basic Biblical Exegesis” during two two-hour seminars which were spread over two days. The outcome from those two-day sessions have influenced my perspective about how I will approach training this audience in the future, and therefore, those initial seminars will impact my ministry moving forward.

Initially, I plan to increase the frequency of training I provide to bi-vocational pastors. This will allow time for me to address adequately each aspect of Robinson’s ten-step training in separate individual sessions.

Therefore, I plan to expand this training by writing eight manuals that address Robinson’s ten steps. Why eight manuals and not ten? Because some of Robinson’s steps are short enough that they can work in tandem with each other without compromising the

effectiveness of instruction. For example, I believe that since the introduction and the conclusion are written last, the two can coexist in one training manual.

Next, I will offer these trainings to the urban pastors within the Free Methodist denomination and then to other urban pastors outside of this denomination. In fact, I have already been contacted by ten bi-vocational pastors in Los Angeles, Long Beach, and the Boyle Heights area of Los Angeles. My thought here is to begin a training academy for building skills in ministry for bi-vocational preachers.

The outcome of my project design was not exactly what I envisioned. In fact, the project was flawed because I attempted to do too much in the short time I had. However, as a result of those mistakes, I now recognize how focused and intentional I have to be about my training purpose. Achieving the stated goal depends heavily on wise selection of the material but also carefully planned exercises, class discussion, examples, and time for questions from students. Accomplishing the goal results in promoting an environment that fosters the right amount of nurture and challenge. I eagerly look forward to what is next.

APPENDIX ONE
PRE-SEMINAR SURVEY

Preachers Survey Questionnaire

Name:

Number of years in ministry: 1 year

Phone:

1. What is basic exegesis? *The way in which one extracts the meaning of a text. Expanded study of the authors intent when writing the text*
2. Have you been trained in basic exegesis? *Yes*
3. If limited or no training, do you see any value in receiving formal training in how to develop a sermon? *Yes*

If not, why not? *It is profitable for giving non-believers a linear testimony + applying it to scripture also for basic apologetics*

If so, explain what impact this training would have on your ministry.

It helps to answer in love. It helps to show that you have not taken the word to others w/out consideration

4. How many points should an effective sermon make? 3

Why? *People usually will begin to forget things or lose focus if you introduce too many points*

Preachers Survey Questionnaire

Name: *Debra Wright*
Phone: *(323) 687-9507*

Number of years in ministry: *less than one yr.*

1. What is basic exegesis?

Extracting meaning from scripture

2. Have you been trained in basic exegesis?

Yes... in bible study.

3. If limited or no training, do you see any value in receiving formal training in how to develop a sermon?

Yes

If not, why not?

If so, explain what impact this training would have on your ministry.

This is important for congregants who may relate to me & my testimony & scripture.

4. How many points should an effective sermon make?

One or two. No more.

Why?

Easy to understand for the listeners.

Preachers Survey Questionnaire

Name: Clarence H. Howell

Number of years in ministry: 2 yrs

Phone: (310) 806-5823

1. What is basic exegesis?

Ability to extract the meaning of the word

2. Have you been trained in basic exegesis?

Some

3. If limited or no training, do you see any value in receiving formal training in how to develop a sermon?

Yes

If not, why not?

If so, explain what impact this training would have on your ministry.

To give more direction of the message and to give clearly to the receiver of the message

4. How many points should an effective sermon make?

3 or 4

Why?

To make sure the message is being clear and ~~not~~ understood

Preachers Survey Questionnaire

Name

Number of years in ministry: 18 years.

Phone

1. What is basic exegesis? Be able to speak about the word "What is the text saying?"

2. Have you been trained in basic exegesis?

Some.

3. If limited or no training, do you see any value in receiving formal training in how to develop a sermon? Yes

If not, why not? I should be ready at all times and if I don't develop my craft - I will be needed.

If so, explain what impact this training would have on your ministry.

It would have a great impact - Because I'm called by God to make disciples and apart of disciplining is being able to impart His word correctly.

4. How many points should an effective sermon make?

Just depends on the crowd

Why?

Gospel should be only one
A formal message could be one
or more.

(Just don't talk sooooo long.)

Preachers Survey Questionnaire

Name:

Number of years in ministry:

Phone:

1. What is basic exegesis?

Ability to extract from
The Scripture

2. Have you been trained in basic exegesis?

yes

3. If limited or no training, do you see any value in receiving formal training in how to develop a sermon?

yes

If not, why not?

If so, explain what impact this training would have on your ministry.

Using your testimonies as part of your message
& applying Scripture especially from JC
I think (3) & from Wk

4. How many points should an effective sermon make?

Why?

opening, purpose of conclusion
or reason for the Scripture

Preachers Survey Questionnaire

Name: *Jackie Lanson*
Phone: *323 7706553*

Number of years in ministry:

1. What is basic exegesis?
Book of Acts

2. Have you been trained in basic exegesis? *yes*

3. If limited or no training, do you see any value in receiving formal training in how to develop a sermon? *yes*

If not, why not?

If so, explain what impact this training would have on your ministry.

Using my testimony along w/ Bible passage to teach others

4. How many points should an effective sermon make?

As many as it takes to get the message across

Why?

Everyone learns & understands at a different level

Preachers Survey Questionnaire

Number of years in ministry:

0

1. What is basic exegesis?

The ability to extract the meaning of the text

2. Have you been trained in basic exegesis?

yes. basics

3. If limited or no training, do you see any value in receiving formal training in how to develop a sermon? yes

If not, why not?

If so, explain what impact this training would have on your ministry.

It would allow me to be a better preacher

4. How many points should an effective sermon make?

At least 2 to 3 points

Why?

Preachers Survey Questionnaire

Name: Sake Johnson

Number of years in ministry: mostly all
my life

Phone: 502-3351534

1. Have you been trained in basic exegesis? No, but I have had some training under Pastor Johnny Baylor at Sudon Baptist Church
2. If limited or no training, do you see any value in receiving formal training in how to develop a sermon? Absolutely

If not, why not?

If so, explain what impact this training would have on your ministry.

2 Timothy 2:15. We are to study. Being ~~a~~ a workman that does not study does not get the approval of God.

3. How many points should an effective sermon make?

I believe 3 with subpoints

Why? I would want to give too much information to the audience, if I did they would not recall the first points.

4. How confident are you in your ability to locate and accurately express the big idea of a passage? I am confident, for the most part.

Preachers Survey Questionnaire

Jr. Number of years in ministry: 1.5

1. Have you been trained in basic exegesis?

Yes.

2. If limited or no training, do you see any value in receiving formal training in how to develop a sermon? yes

If not, why not?

If so, explain what impact this training would have on your ministry.

I would become more diversified / versatile.
I have ^{life} experience, but limited formal training

3. How many points should an effective sermon make?

As many as it takes. I usually use 3.

Why? Time constraints, and it gets my point across.

4. How confident are you in your ability to locate and accurately express the big idea of a passage?

On a scale of 1 to 10, I think I'm about a 6.

Preachers Survey Questionnaire

Number of years in ministry:

1994

1. Have you been trained in basic exegesis?

Limited

2. If limited or no training, do you see any value in receiving formal training in how to develop a sermon? *yes*

If not, why not?

If so, explain what impact this training would have on your ministry.

To be able to hear what God calls

3. How many points should an effective sermon make?

Four

Why? Plan of salvation

4. How confident are you in your ability to locate and accurately express the big idea of a passage? *Confident when prayer and meditation is done*

Preachers Survey Questionnaire

Name: John Santos

Number of years in ministry: 10

Phone: 310 400-4866

1. Have you been trained in basic exegesis? no

2. If limited or no training, do you see any value in receiving formal training in how to develop a sermon? yes!

If not, why not?

If so, explain what impact this training would have on your ministry.

It would be nice to be able to get some training in this new area of expounding the word of God verbally

3. How many points should an effective sermon make? 3

Why? you have to make the point of the scripture how it impacts us today, and the gospel

4. How confident are you in your ability to locate and accurately express the big idea of a passage? average

Preachers Survey Questionnaire

Name: Geraldine Y. LaRose

Phone: (310) 903-9205

Number of years in ministry: 5 ~~years~~ years as a believer, and about 42 years in ministry.

1. Have you been trained in basic exegesis? Yes.
2. If limited or no training, do you see any value in receiving formal training in how to develop a sermon? Yes

If not, why not? N/A

If so, explain what impact this training would have on your ministry.

I will be better able to rightly divide the word, when relaying it to others.

3. How many points should an effective sermon make? About three.

Why? We need to know the Topic, Scripture, and expound on it in a learnable fashion.

4. How confident are you in your ability to locate and accurately express the big idea of a passage? Quite confident, but there is always room for improvement.

Preachers Survey Questionnaire

— Number of years in ministry:

25 years

1. Have you been trained in basic exegesis?

Yes

2. If limited or no training, do you see any value in receiving formal training in how to develop a sermon?

Yes definitely.

If not, why not?

If so, explain what impact this training would have on your ministry.

How to better equip + teach God's people.

3. How many points should an effective sermon make?

3

Why? To make sure the people understand fully what the text is saying.

4. How confident are you in your ability to locate and accurately express the big idea of a passage?

Very Confident!

Preachers Survey Questionnaire

Approx. 1.5 to
Number of years in ministry: 02

1. Have you been trained in basic exegesis?

no

2. If limited or no training, do you see any value in receiving formal training in how to develop a sermon?

Yes, i' thanks!
If not, why not?

If so, explain what impact this training would have on your ministry.

I feel it would fill a void & a hunger that I have for exactly this. It provide an opportunity that I have expected to have.

3. How many points should an effective sermon make?

3

Why? To keep the sermon succinct, to the point & (hopefully) engaging

4. How confident are you in your ability to locate and accurately express the big idea of a passage?

At this stage of my 'Sermon' Development I am confident. Nonetheless I relish the opportunity to capitalize/improve on my initial basis.

Preachers Survey Questionnaire

Name:

Number of years in ministry:

Phone:

1. What is basic exegesis?

Ability to extract the meaning of the word

2. Have you been trained in basic exegesis?

Some

3. If limited or no training, do you see any value in receiving formal training in how to develop a sermon? *yes*

If not, why not?

If so, explain what impact this training would have on your ministry.

Effectively minister to others

4. How many points should an effective sermon make?

Dont know

Why?

APPENDIX TWO
HANDBOOK FOR BASIC BIBLICAL EXEGESIS

First Seminar

Training in Basic Exegetical Skills

Welcome and Prayer

Time: 2 hours

Objectives: At the end of this seminar, the student should be able to (a) identify a unit of Scripture, and (b) state the dominant or main idea of that unit and (c) state the dominant idea in its concise contemporary language.

Note: The teaching strategy in each seminar follows the same format: lecture, use of Power Point to illustrate, and feedback. Students therefore are encouraged to feel free to request clarification or explanation at any time.

How to Select a Passage

- To select an appropriate biblical passage, identify a unit of Scripture that contains a subject and its complete complement which fully answers the question that the subject is asking explicitly or implicitly in the text.

Class Exercise (5 minutes)

Start by asking students to identify some problems that make listening to sermons difficult or hard to follow. The purpose of this exercise is to show that there is a need for sermons to have one dominant idea, a clear reason for the audience to continue to listen

and an order by which it progresses. As a result, the need will be provided to introduce the big idea method.

Lecture (20-25 minutes)

In this lecture I share my basic assumptions or presuppositions about preaching, and the reason I believe students should take this course. These are the basic assumptions:

- Preaching has been and will continue to be the divinely ordained and primary method of communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ.

When I taught this course, students identified the following problems:

- Effective preaching rests primarily on the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, who exerts his influence upon both the preacher and the hearers.
- Anyone can be taught to improve their communication skills.
- It is the responsibility of the believing community to prepare and train other believers in the communication of the gospel. After these assumptions are shared, I then introduce the Big Idea method of sermon preparation as a very effective model for (expository) preaching.

Stage1—Selecting Your Passage

A unit of Scripture is any passage which can stand on its own. It must also be placed in its historical/grammatical context. For example, in the case of Old Testament narratives, units of Scripture would be stories which have a beginning, a sequence of events, and a conclusion. These are fairly obvious for the biblical writers clearly wanted to convey certain episodes in the life of the patriarchs or prophets in which they showed

how God revealed his plan and purpose in their lives. In the case of the prophecies, or prophetic literature, the prophets usually announce beforehand the application of their utterances. In the Psalms, most psalms are a unit and should be treated as a whole. In the Gospels, units of Scripture are identified as episodes, events, or teachings (whether by parables or direct discourse) of Jesus. In the epistles, units are more fluid in their boundaries. One has to be aware that the writers had a specific purpose in writing their letters and that the entire epistle can be thought of as a unit, but for preaching purposes they can be broken down into those passages where the author is addressing a particular topic. It is also important to note that in biblical preaching the text becomes the material fabric to woven into a sermon. When we declare a text from the pulpit or teach it from a lectern, what follows should reflect that specific biblical passage in its points, themes, and message. It should be clear to the audience that the scriptural passage is the foundation of the sermon or teaching. Here are some ways to choose a text from a biblical passage.

Personal Study or Bible Reading Plan

Needs of the Congregation

Book of the Bible or Series

Church Calendar

Lectionary

How Do You Decide What Passage to Preach?

A. You have an understanding of the needs of your congregation needs.

Pro: Your sermon can be relevant and timely.

Con: You could be wrong about what you think the congregation needs.

B. You understand the contents of the Bible.

Pro: You have a wide range to choose from.

Con: Knowing the Bible isn't enough, you must also know your hearers.

C. You follow a lectionary.

Pro: You get a well-rounded selection of the Scripture including ones you might not ordinarily preach.

Con: The passage chosen for you might not be relevant for your hearers.

D. You decide to preach from a book of the Bible.

Pro: You don't have to agonize over what to preach each week.

You are forced to work through passages you might not otherwise preach.

Con: The series may become boring and therefore too drawn out.

E. You decide to preach on a certain topic.

Pro: You may pick the right topic.

Con: You may be biased about the topic you choose or worse choose the wrong topic for the audience.

Once we have determined what our unit of Scripture is, we must then ask some key questions of our selected text.

(1) What is the author talking about? What is his subject? To answer this question look at the passage as a whole. What is he endeavoring to communicate?

(2) Now look at the passage in its parts. What is the writer saying about what he is talking about? For example, it is obvious that 1 Corinthians 13 is all about why we should value love above every other gift for ministry. That is the subject. The complement answers the implicit question (why should we value love above

every other gift?). The complement then becomes, we should value love above every other gift because without it, ministry is totally useless. With it, ministry is totally effective.

Class Exercise (15 minutes)

At this point, six units of Scripture are examined with the students to determine the subject and complement of each unit. Three units from the Old Testament, representing narrative, poetic and prophetic literature, plus three units from the New Testament, representing gospel, epistle and apocalyptic are examined. The scriptural units with their subject and complement are

Genesis 3:1-7

Psalms 1

Amos 4:1-3

Acts 1:1-8

Titus 1:5-9

Romans 8:38-39

Answers to the Subject and Complement Exercise

Genesis 3:1-7 Subject: How sin came into the world

Complement: Sin came into the world through yielding to the temptation to disobey God.

Psalms 1 Subject: Does it make a difference how a blessed man lives?

Complement: How a blessed man lives determines where he ends up.

Amos 4:1-3 Subject: Who needs to hear the Word of the Lord?

Complement: Oppressors of the poor, who only want more, should pay attention before it is too late.

Acts 1:1-8 Subject: What is the result of receiving power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you?

Complement: Believers become witnesses for Christ in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, and even to the remotest parts of the earth.

Titus 1:5-9 Subject: What is the result of setting in order what remains?

Complement: Qualified elders are appointed in every city who hold onto the faithful word according to the teaching.

Romans 8:38-39 Subject: Why Christians can never be separated from God?

Complement: We can never be separated from God because His love is greater than anyone or anything in the universe.

Stage2—Discover the Big Idea

Haddon Robinson says, “A sermon, like any good speech, embodies a single, all-encompassing concept.”¹ The fields of speech communication and homiletics are unified in agreement that communication centers on a single idea, and not a collection of scattered ideas. It is therefore imperative that before you can develop a sermon, you must locate the major idea of the passage. Fortunately, you don’t have to invent one; the author has already supplied what you need. However, it is your job to discover his idea, and once you have, then you state the author’s idea in the words of the text.

¹ Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 36.

To say this another way, the author's main idea becomes your main idea under development in your sermon or teaching. We will call his main idea, which comes directly from the biblical text, the Big Idea.

- A. The Big Idea of the passage is the single sentence that captures the main truth of the biblical text you are studying.
- B. Every Big Idea is made up of two parts: the subject and the complement.
 - 1. The subject (also known as the topic, theme or thesis) is
 - a. What the biblical writer is talking about
 - b. What is being discussed in the text
 - c. The topic under discussion
 - 2. The complement (focus, thrust or assertion) is
 - a. What the biblical writer is saying about what he is talking about
 - b. What is being said about what is being discussed
 - c. What is being said about the topic under discussion
- C. How to identify the Big Idea of the text. Refer to the following text.

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb 12:1-2)

- 1. The subject tells what the biblical writer is talking about and should be specific. The subject should also be accurate and adequate. In our verse above the subject is *What it means to have a great cloud of witnesses surrounding you.*

2. The complement tells what the biblical writer is saying about what he is talking about. The complement limits and specifies the subject. In the text above there are three complements:
 - a. lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles you
 - b. run with endurance the race that is set before you
 - c. fixing your eyes on Jesus
3. The Big Idea of the text is a combination of the subject and its complement. In our text above there are three complements; the Big Idea or TextBI would be *The result of being surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses is you must lay aside everything that entangles you, run with endurance, and fix your eyes on Jesus.*
4. Restating the TextBi into a Homiletical Big Idea or HomBI would be *Running with a hedge of protection and my eyes fixed on Jesus*

Exercise: Discover the Big Idea of the Text

1. The two components of the Big Idea are the s _____ and the _____ t.
2. Discover the Big Idea of each of these passages.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. (Ps 23)

Subject: _____

Complement: _____

TBI: _____

HomBI: _____

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom 5:1)

Subject: _____

Complement: _____

TBI: _____

HomBI: _____

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit. (Prov 18:21)

Subject: _____

Complement: _____

TBI: _____

HomBI: _____

Stage 3—Identify the Purpose of the Message

The question every preacher or teacher should ask themselves before they stand in front of any audience is, Why am I preaching or teaching this message? It is not good enough to preach or teach because it your responsibility to teach or preach the truth to people who are on their way to hell.

The purpose is what you expect to happen as a result of listeners hearing the sermon and the message of that sermon hitting its intended target. “No matter how brilliant or biblical a sermon is, without a definite purpose it is not worth preaching.”² Be sure that every sermon you preach or lesson you teach hits the intended target.

² Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 106.

The purpose must be consistent with the biblical purpose. Many sermons fail here because they do not reflect what the original writer had in mind. The purpose of the sermon call to attention the burden of the passage or Fallen Condition Focus of the hearers, as Bryan Chapell calls it.³ Once discovered, the sermon purpose should be written out. What specifically do you want to happen in the life of the listener as a result of this sermon being preached?

A. Examples of purpose statements

1. The listener should understand grace.
2. The listener will be able to list the fruit of the Spirit.
3. The listener should be grateful her sins are forgiven.
4. The listener should pray about a current challenge in his life.

B. Benefits of having a clear purpose.⁴

1. Focuses the introduction of the sermon on the need that will be raised in the sermon
2. Determines what must be included and/or excluded in the body of the sermon
3. Influences the sermon's conclusion and application
4. Helps in choosing the illustrations that will accomplish the purpose of the sermon
5. Provides a more objective way to measure the proficiency or success of the sermon.

³ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 48-49.

⁴ Ramesh Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons: A Seven-Step Method for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 78.

6. Directly contributes to the formulating of the Big Idea

Exercise: Discover the Purpose of the Sermon

List an appropriate purpose for each sermon. The first passage is an example:

Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart (Luke 18:1)

Subject: When we should pray

Complement: We ought to pray at all times

TextBI: People ought to pray at all times

HomBI: You ought to always pray

Purpose: To challenge people to be consistent in their prayer life

In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, (1 Pet 3:1)

Subject: _____

Complement: _____

TBI: _____

HomBI: _____

Purpose: _____

I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me and heard my cry. (Ps 40)

Subject: _____

Complement: _____

TBI: _____

HomBI: _____

Purpose: _____

Assignments to be completed before next seminar

- Read *Biblical Preaching* by Haddon Robinson, specifically chapter 6, pages 131-35, on outlining a passage.
- In teams of two consider the following passages (one passage per team).

Determine the subject and the complement of each passage; then state the Textual Big Idea and the purpose of your assigned passage: Genesis 2:8-25; Psalm 46; Ecclesiastes 12:1-8; Isaiah 9:6-7; Matthew 5:43-48; John 8:1-12; Ephesians 6:10-18; Revelation 21:1-8.

Second Seminar

Constructing an Outline

Objective: After this seminar, the student should be able to construct a textual outline and a homiletical outline of an assigned unit of Scripture.

Time: 2 hours

Brief review of the Big Idea approach to preaching

Lecture (20-25 minutes): How to Construct an Outline

Text: Psalm 1

Subject: Why it makes a difference how a blessed person lives.

Complement: How a blessed person lives will determine where she ends up.

TexBI: How a blessed person lives matters because how she lives determines where she ends up!

HomBI: Paying attention to your life now pays dividends in eternity!

Purpose: To encourage God's people to behave every day like the blessing of God is on their lives.

Textual Outline

I. The blessed (truly happy) person is one who orders his life

he does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly

he who does not stand in the path of sinners

he does not sit in the seat of the scornful

II. The blessed man is one who takes delight in the law of the Lord

in this law he meditates day and night

III. The blessed man is like a tree well nourished

he will bring forth fruit in due time

his leaf shall not wither

whatever he does shall prosper

By contrast, the ungodly are not blessed

are like chaff which the wind drives away

will not be able to stand in the judgement

or assemble with the righteous

Conclusion: The Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly will perish.

Homiletical Outline

I. The blessed (truly happy) person is one who establishes godly priorities in his life.

He is known by the company he does not keep.

He is known by his delight in God's Word.

II. The blessed person will experience an abundant life.

It will be a life of fruitfulness.

It will be a life of constant refreshing.

It will be a life of true prosperity.

III. By contrast the ungodly person will live a life that comes to a tragic end.

In the end their life will be found to be superficial.

They will not pass the test of God's judgment.

They cannot fellowship with God's people.

Conclusion: The Lord knows how you are living. How are you living your life? How you live now has consequences both for this life and in the judgement to come.

Text: Psalm 37:1-5

Subject: Why fret because of evildoers?

Complement: Evildoers will wither quickly like the grass.

TexBI: Don't fret because of evildoers; evildoers will wither quickly like the grass.

HomBI: Don't be vexed by what you see!

Purpose: To encourage God's people to keep trusting in the Lord despite what they see.

Textual Outline

I. Do not fret because of evildoers or be envious of workers of iniquity

because they shall soon be cut down like the grass

and wither as the green herb

II. Trust in the Lord and do good

so shall you dwell in the land

and verily thou shall be fed

III. Delight yourself also in the Lord

he shall give you the desires of thine heart

IV. Commit you way unto the Lord

trust in him

and he shall bring it to pass

Homiletical Outline

I. Don't be vexed by what you see happening with evildoers

their time is short

they will die like plants in the winter

II. Trust in the Lord and keep doing what is good

live your life and practice being faithful

III. Be happy with the Lord

and he will give you the desires of your heart

IV. Place your life into God's trust

Trust him and he will act on your behalf.

Text: Matthew 28:18-20

Subject: Go make disciples

Complement: By baptizing them, and teaching them to observe what I commanded

TextBI: Go Make disciples by baptizing and teaching them to observe what I commanded you.

HomBI: *Get to your assignment!*

Purpose: To encourage believers to obey the command of the Lord.

Textual Outline

I. All authority has been given to Jesus

II. Go make disciples of all nations

baptizing them

teaching them to observe all that I commanded you

III. He will be with us to the end.

Homiletical Outline

I. Jesus has been given all power

II. So go and make disciples of all nations

baptize them

teach them to observe all that Jesus commanded you

III. Jesus will always be present.

Questions/Discussions/Evaluation

APPENDIX THREE

LESSON PLANS FOR SEMINAR IN BASIC BIBLICAL EXEGESIS

Basic Biblical Exegesis

Course Description: This course consists of two two-hour sessions that focus on improving students' skills in basic exegesis and how to outline a biblical passage. The primary method of instruction is lecture, supplemented by the use of a PowerPoint presentation. Time is to be allotted for answering questions. Additionally, discussion and feedback from students are encouraged.

Instructional Goal: By the end of this course students should be able to select a passage and its preaching portion. Second, participants should know how to identify the subject and complement of the historical text, which is otherwise identified as the Textual Big Idea or TexBI. Students will then be enabled to restate the TexBI into a Homiletical Big Idea or HomBI. Subsequently, students will identify the purpose of sermon, also known as the Fallen Condition Focus (FCF), and finally, pupils should be able to properly structure both a textual and homiletical outline of a passage.

Objectives:

- First session: Choose a passage and locate its preaching portion. Next, identify the subject and complement of the selected scriptural passage, state the Textual Big Idea, and then restate the Textual Big Idea into a Homiletical Big Idea. Finally, state the purpose of the sermon, through identifying the burden of writer. In other words, tell what fallen human

condition has raised the concern of God and desperately invokes the plan of redemption.

➤ Homework: Assign students passages to transform the Big Idea into a passage outline.

➤ Second session: Construct both a textual and homiletical outline of the passage that students were assigned at the end of the first session.

Textbooks: *Biblical Preaching* by Haddon Robinson (required); *Biblical Preaching* by Donald Sunukjian (recommended)

First Session: Training in Basic Exegetical Skills

Welcome and Prayer

Time: 2 hours

Objectives: At the end of this session, the student should be able to (a) identify the preaching portion, also known as a unit of Scripture, (b) state the dominant or main idea of that unit using the subject and complement, and (c) state the dominant idea or big idea in its concise historical language, then in its contemporary form.

Note: The teaching strategy in each session follows the same format: lecture, use of PowerPoint to illustrate, and feedback. Students therefore are encouraged to feel free to request clarification or explanation at any time.

In the lecture for this session, state the basic assumptions and presuppositions about preaching and the reason students should take this course. These basic assumptions are:

- Preaching has been and will continue to be the divinely ordained and primary method of communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Effective preaching rests primarily on the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, who exerts his influence upon both the preacher and the hearers.
- Anyone can be taught to improve his communication skills.
- It is the responsibility of the believing community to prepare and train other believers in the communication of the gospel.

Allow time for students to identify problems with preaching today. The list may include these problems and frustrations:

1. Preachers use too many terms that most people do not understand.
2. Too many sermons go off topic from what the preacher said he was going to talk about.
3. Sermons do not match the biblical context.
4. Preachers impose their own meaning on the Scripture.
5. Interpretations of what a Scripture means vary from preacher to preacher.
6. Listeners hear mixed messages in a given sermon.
7. Sermons lack spiritual substance and turn into inspirational talks.

After giving participants the opportunity to share their frustrations and problems with today's preaching, introduce the Big Idea method of sermon preparation as an effective model for expository preaching.

How to Select a Passage

To select an appropriate biblical passage, identify a unit of Scripture that contains a subject and its complete complement, which fully answers the question that the subject is asking explicitly or implicitly in the text.

Class Exercise (5 minutes)

Start by asking students to identify some problems that make listening to sermons difficult. The purpose of this exercise is to show that there is a need for sermons to have one dominant idea, a clear reason for the audience to continue to listen, and an order by which it progresses. As a result, the need will be provided to introduce the Big Idea method.

Stage 1—Selecting Your Passage (Lecture, 20-25 minutes)

A unit of Scripture is any passage which can stand on its own. It must also be placed in its historical and grammatical context. For example, in the case of Old Testament narratives, units of Scripture would be stories which have a beginning, a sequence of events, and a conclusion. These are fairly obvious, for the biblical writers clearly want to convey certain episodes in the lives of the patriarchs or prophets in which they show how God revealed his plan and purpose in their lives. In the case of the prophecies, or prophetic literature, the prophets usually announce beforehand the application of their utterances. In the case of the Psalms, most are a unit and should be treated as a whole. In the Gospels, units of Scripture are identified as episodes, events, and or teachings (whether by parables or direct discourse) of Jesus. In the Epistles, units

are more fluid in their boundaries. One has to be aware that the writers had a specific purpose in writing their letters and that the entire epistle can be thought of as a unit, but for preaching purposes they can be broken down into those passages where the author is addressing a particular topic. It is also important to note that in biblical preaching the text becomes the material fabric to woven into a sermon. When we declare a text from the pulpit or teach it from a lectern, what follows should reflect that specific biblical passage in it points, themes, and message. It should be clear to the audience that the scriptural passage is the foundation of the sermon or teaching. Here are some ways to choose a text from a biblical passage.

Personal Study or Bible Reading Plan

Needs of the Congregation

Book of the Bible or Series

Church Calendar

Lectionary

How Do You Decide What Biblical Passage to Preach?

A. You have an understanding of the needs of your congregation.

Pro: Your sermon can be relevant and timely.

Con: You could be wrong about what you think the congregation needs.

B. You understand the contents of the Bible.

Pro: You have a wide range to choose from.

Con: Knowing the Bible isn't enough; you must also know the hearers.

C. You follow a lectionary.

Pro: You get a well-rounded selection of the Scripture, including ones you might not ordinarily preach.

Con: The passage chosen for you might not be relevant for your hearers.

D. You decide to preach from a book of the Bible.

Pro: You do not have to agonize over what to preach each week. You are forced to work through passages you might not otherwise preach.

Con: The series may become too drawn out and therefore boring.

E. You decide to preach on a certain topic.

Pro: You may pick the right topic.

Con: You may be biased about the topic you choose or choose the wrong topic for the audience.

Once we have determined what our unit of Scripture is, we must then ask some key questions of our selected text.

(1) What is the author talking about? What is his subject? To answer this question, look at the passage as a whole. What is he endeavoring to communicate? (It is very important when introducing students to this method to get them to look at the overall concept. In other words, readers must be aware of the entire block of Scripture. A common mistake students will often make will be to start listing what each verse is saying.) Questions to ask that will help in determining the subject are: What question is the writer trying to answer? What response is being called for in this passage? Why are these commands, warnings, and/or exhortations given?

(2) Now look at the passage in its parts. What is the writer saying about what he is talking about? For example, it is obvious that 1 Corinthians 13 is all about why we should

value love above every other gift for ministry. That is the subject. The complement answers the implicit question: Why should we value love above every other gift? The complement then becomes, We should value love above every other gift because without it, ministry is totally useless. With it, ministry is totally effective.

Class Exercise (15 minutes)

At this point, six units of Scripture are examined with the students to determine the subject and complement of each unit. Three units from the Old Testament, representing narrative, poetic, and prophetic literature, plus three units from the New Testament, representing Gospel, epistle, and apocalyptic literature, are examined. The scriptural units with their subject and complements are Genesis 3:1-7, Psalm 1, Amos 4:1-3, Acts 1:1-8, Titus 1:5-9, and Romans 8:38-39.

Answers to the Subject and Complement Exercise

Genesis 3:1-7 Subject: How sin came into the world

Complement: Sin came into the world through yielding to the temptation to disobey God.

Psalms 1 Subject: Does it make a difference how I live?

Complement: How you live determines where you end up.

Amos 4:1-3 Subject: Who needs to hear the Word of the Lord?

Complement: Oppressors of the poor, who only want more, should pay attention before it is too late.

Acts 1:1-8 Subject: What is the result of receiving power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you?

Complement: Believers become witnesses for Christ in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, and even to the remotest parts of the earth.

Titus 1:5-9 Subject: What is the result of setting in order what remains?

Complement: Qualified elders are appointed in every city who hold onto the faithful word according to the teaching.

Romans 8:38-39 Subject: Why Christians can never be separated from God

Complement: We can never be separated from God because his love is greater than anyone or anything in the universe.

Take time to go over each of these passages with the students in class, stressing the need to look at the passage as a whole. This is a difficult step, but necessary in developing a sermon which revolves around a main idea.

Stage2—Discover the Big Idea

Haddon Robinson says, “A sermon, like any good speech, embodies a single, all-encompassing concept.”¹ The fields of speech communication and homiletics are unified in agreement that communication centers on a single idea, and not a collection of scattered ideas. It is therefore imperative that before you can develop a sermon, you must locate the major idea of the passage. Fortunately, you do not have to invent one; the author has already supplied what you need. However, it is your job to discover his idea, and once you have, then you state the author’s idea in the words of the text.

¹ Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 36.

To say this another way, the author's main idea becomes your main idea under development in your sermon or teaching. We will call his main idea, which comes directly from the biblical text, the Big Idea.

The Big Idea of the passage is the single sentence that captures the main truth of the biblical text you are studying.

Every Big Idea is made up of two parts: the subject and the complement.

The subject (also known as the topic, theme, or thesis) is

What the biblical writer is talking about

What is being discussed in the text

The topic under discussion

The complement (the focus, thrust, or assertion) is

What the biblical writer is saying about what he is talking about

What is being said about what is being discussed

What is being said about the topic under discussion

How to identify the Big Idea of the text (refer to the following text)

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb 12:1-2)

The subject tells what the biblical writer is talking about and should be

specific. The subject should also be accurate and adequate. In our verses

above the subject is *What it means to recognize a great cloud of witnesses surrounding you.*

The complement tells what the biblical writer is saying about what he is talking about. The complement limits and specifies the subject. In the text above there are three complements. They are

Lay aside the every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles you.

Run with endurance the race that is set before you.

Fix your eyes on Jesus!

The Big Idea of the text is a combination of the subject and its complement(s).

In our text above there are three complements; the Big Idea or TextBI would be *The result of knowing that you are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses is you know it's time to lay aside everything that entangles you and run with endurance having your eyes fixed on Jesus.*

Restating the TextBI into a Homiletical Big Idea or HomBI could be

“Knowing the right conditions for running with focus.”

Transition: Knowing the right conditions for running with focus will enable you to recognize that

It's time to lay aside the every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles you.

It's time to run with endurance the race that is set before you.

It's time to fix your eyes on Jesus!

Exercise: Discover the Big Idea of the Text

The two components of the Big Idea are the subject and the complement.

Discover the Big Idea of each of these passages.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. (Ps 23:1-3)

Subject: What does it mean that the Lord is my shepherd?

Complement: He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet water, He restores my soul; He guides in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

TBI: Because He is my shepherd, I shall not want, He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet water, He restores my soul; He guides in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

HomBI: Because the Lord is my shepherd, all of my needs are met.

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom 5:1)

Subject: What is the result of having been justified by faith?

Complement: We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

TBI: The result of being justified by faith is that you have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

HomBI: Putting your faith in Jesus brings you peace with God.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit. (Prov 18:21)

Subject: What is the result of death and life being in the power of the tongue?

Complement: Those who love it will eat its fruit.

TBI: The result of death and life being in the power of the tongue is that those who love it will eat its fruit.

HomBI: There is power in your tongue.

Stage 3—Identify the Purpose of the Message

The question every preacher or teacher should ask before standing in front of any audience is, Why am I preaching or teaching this message? It is not good enough to preach or teach because it your responsibility to teach or preach the truth to people who are on their way to hell. Frankly, they probably are already aware of that. Just as every business must identify its purpose, that is, the leaders must know the reason they are in business, so every sermon or lesson that is taught by a preacher must have a purpose.

Robinson, quoting A. W. Tozer's thoughts about purpose, writes:

There is scarcely anything so dull and meaningless as Bible doctrine taught for the its own sake. Truth divorced from life is not truth in its Biblical sense, but something else and something less. . . . No man is better for knowing that God in the beginning created the heaven and the earth. The devil knows that, and so did Ahab and Judas Iscariot. No man is better for knowing that God so loved the world of men that He gave His only begotten Son to die for their redemption. In hell there are millions who know that. Theological truth is useless until it is obeyed. The purpose behind all doctrine is to secure moral action.²

The purpose is what you expect to happen as a result of listeners hearing the sermon and the problem that sermon presents to its intended audience. Robinson emphasizes the futility in preaching a sermon without a clear purpose: "No matter how brilliant or biblical a sermon is, without a definite purpose it is not worth preaching."³ Be sure that every sermon you preach or lesson you teach hits the intended target.

The purpose must be consistent with the biblical purpose. Many sermons fail here because they do not reflect what the original writer had in mind. The purpose of the sermon is to call to attention the burden of the passage or Fallen Condition Focus (FCF)

² A. W. Tozer, *Of God and Man* (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1960), 26-27.

³ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 106.

of the hearers, as Bryan Chapell refers to it.⁴ Once discovered, the sermon purpose should be written out. What specifically do you want to happen in the life of the listener as a result of this sermon being preached?

A. Examples of purpose statements

1. The listener should understand grace.
2. The listener will be able to list the fruit of the Spirit.
3. The listener should be grateful her sins are forgiven.
4. The listener should pray about a current challenge in his life.

B. Benefits of having a clear purpose⁵

1. Focuses the introduction of the sermon on the need that will be raised in the sermon
2. Determines what must be included and/or excluded in the body of the sermon
3. Influences the sermon's conclusion and application
4. Helps in choosing the illustrations that will accomplish the purpose of the sermon
5. Provides a more objective way to measure the proficiency or success of the sermon
6. Directly contributes to the formulating of the Big Idea

⁴ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 48-49.

⁵ Ramesh Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons: A Seven-Step Method for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 78.

Exercise: Discover the Purpose of the Sermon

1. List an appropriate purpose for each sermon. The first passage is an example.

Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart. (Luke 18:1)

Subject: When we should pray

Complement: We ought to pray at all times

TextBI: People ought to pray at all times

HomBI: You ought to always pray

Purpose: To challenge people to be consistent in their prayer life

In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives. (1 Pet 3:1)

Subject: _____

Complement: _____

TBI: _____

HomBI: _____

Purpose: _____

I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me and heard my cry. (Ps 40)

Subject: _____

Complement: _____

TBI: _____

HomBI: _____

Purpose: _____

Assignments to Be Completed Before the Next Session

- Read *Biblical Preaching* by Haddon Robinson, chapter 6, pages 131-35, on outlining a passage
- In teams of three consider the following passages:
(1) Psalm 1; (2) Psalm 37:1-5; (3) Matthew 28:18-20
Each team will draw a number which represents their team's passage.
- Determine the subject and the complement of each passage. Then state the TextBI, HomBI, and the purpose of your assigned passage.

Second Session: Constructing an Outline

Time: 2 hours

Objective: After this session, the student should be able to construct a textual outline and a homiletical outline of an assigned unit of Scripture.

Brief Review: The Big Idea approach to preaching

How to Construct an Outline (Lecture, 20-25 minutes)

An outline is a structural framework that encases the Big Idea of the sermon. Another way to understand an outline is that an outline expands the complement (What is the author saying about what he is talking about?). Ezekiel 36 helps to illustrate this point. We find Ezekiel in the midst of the valley, where God brought him to an encounter with the dry bones. The bones came together, bone to bone, and then the sinews, and then the flesh came upon them. But of course it was not until the breath of the Lord came upon them that they stood up, a great army. In like fashion, an exhaustive outline, although it

provides for an orderly exposition of the text, still is dependent on the Spirit, who, through the preacher, brings the Word to life in the hearers. And yet the outline, just like the orderly coming together of the bones, is necessary in order for the sermon to have unity and order and progress.

It is necessary to explain the difference between a textual outline and a homiletical outline. The textual outline is what many students are doing when they are first asked what the author is saying. They proceed to list every phrase and verse. A good textual outline establishes the major movements or natural divisions of the author's subject. The most usual method is to use Roman numerals to identify the major points, with Arabic numerals for main subpoints and then alphabetical letters to identify minor subpoints. A good textual outline will serve the preacher well in establishing the order and progress of the sermon and at the same time keep the sermon expository in nature. However, while the textual outline is a must in establishing the flow of thought, merely using the textual outline in preaching will probably ensure that the text remains merely historical. For sermons to be effective, they need to recast the Word of God in a contemporary framework. This is where the homiletical outline comes in.

The homiletical outline is what one takes into the pulpit (either in the preacher's mind or on paper). The homiletical outline and the textual outline may contain the same words or phrases in their major points, but the homiletical outline can be thought of as bridging the gap between the ancient text and the contemporary world of the preacher and the congregation. The major points of the homiletical outline, while paralleling the textual outline, will put it in contemporary terms so as to facilitate interest and

understanding. The following four examples of textual and homiletical outlines are taken from the examples in the first session to provide continuity.

Note: These outlines are either projected onto a screen or prepared as a handout to each student for study, clarification, and class discussion. Please note that these outlines are in their most basic form. Introductions and conclusions, as well as the order and flow of the sermon, will not be considered in this session.

Text: Psalm 1

Subject: Why it makes a difference how you live?

Complement: How you live will determine where you end up.

TexBI: How you live matters, because how you live determines where you end up!

HomBI: Paying attention to your life now pays dividends in eternity!

Purpose: To encourage God's people to be watchful of their daily behavior

Textual Outline

I. The blessed (truly happy) person is one who orders his life

he does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly

he who does not stand in the path of sinners

he does not sit in the seat of the scornful

II. The blessed man is one who takes delight in the law of the Lord

in this law he meditates day and night

III. The blessed man is like a tree well nourished

he will bring forth fruit in due time

his leaf shall not wither

whatever he does shall prosper.

By contrast, the ungodly are not blessed

they are like chaff which the wind drives away

they will not be able to stand in the judgment

nor assemble with the righteous

Conclusion: The Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly will perish.

Homiletical Outline

I. The blessed (truly happy) person is one who establishes godly priorities in his life

he is known by the company he does not keep

he is known by his delight in God's Word

II. The blessed person will experience an abundant life

it will be a life of fruitfulness

it will be a life of constant refreshing

it will be a life of true prosperity

III. By contrast, ungodly persons will live lives that come to a tragic end

in the end, their life will be found to be superficial

they will not pass the test of God's judgement

they cannot fellowship with God's people

Conclusion: The Lord knows how you are living. How are you living your life?
How you live now has consequences both for this life and in the judgment to come.

Text: Psalm 37:1-5

Subject: Why fret because of evildoers?

Complement: Evildoers will wither quickly like the grass.

TextBI: Don't fret because of evildoers; evildoers will wither quickly like the grass.

HomBI: Don't be vexed by what you see!

Purpose: To encourage God's people to keep trusting in the Lord despite what they see.

Textual Outline

- I. Do not fret because of evildoers or be envious of workers of iniquity
 - because they shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb
- II. Trust in the Lord and do good
 - so shall you dwell in the land
 - and verily you shall be fed
- III. Delight yourself also in the Lord
 - he shall give you the desires of your heart
- IV. Commit you way unto the Lord

trust in him

and he shall bring it to pass

Homiletical Outline

I. Don't be vexed by what you see evil people getting away with

their time is short

they will die like plants in the winter

II. Trust in the Lord and keep doing what is good

live your life and practice being faithful

III. Be happy with the Lord

and he will give you the desires of your heart

IV. Place your life into God's trust

trust him and he will act on your behalf

Text: Matthew 28:18-20

Subject: Go make disciples

Complement: By baptizing them and teaching them to observe what I [Jesus] commanded

TextBI: Go make disciples by baptizing and teaching them to observe what I commanded you.

HomBI: *Get to your assignment!*

Purpose: To encourage believers to obey the command of the Lord

Textual Outline

- I. All authority has been given to Jesus
- II. Go make disciples of all nations
 - baptizing them
 - teaching them to observe all that I commanded you
- III. He will be with us to the end

Homiletical Outline

- 1. Jesus has been given all power
- II. So go and make disciples of all nations
 - baptize them
 - teach them to observe all that I commanded you
- III. Jesus will always be present

The Wrap-Up

Following the presentation of these examples, allow time for questions and some discussion. Emphasize that not everybody will outline a passage in exactly the same way. However, every outline should be clear, orderly, and progressive. A good outline is one which facilitates the flow of the message toward a conclusion in which there is a response from the hearers.

APPENDIX FOUR
POST-SEMINAR SURVEY

**Basic Biblical Exegesis
Seminar Evaluation Sheet**

Instructor: Robert Marshall

Conducted: 11/2/2015

1. The Subject of a biblical passage is?
 - a. ☒ What the biblical writer is talking about
 - b. ☐ What the biblical writer is feeling
 - c. ☐ What the biblical writer is saying about what he is talking about
2. What is the Compliment of a biblical passage?
 - a. ☐ There is no such thing as a compliment in a biblical passage
 - b. ☐ The compliment stands on its own in a biblical passage
 - c. ☒ The compliment is what the biblical writer is saying about what he is talking about
3. On a scale on 1-10, how important is it for preachers and bible teachers to learn the skill of basic biblical exegesis?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ☒ 10
4. On a scale on 1-10, how important to the listener is it for the preacher to establish the sermon's purpose?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ☒ 10
5. Is it ever permissible for a preacher or bible teacher to assign their own meaning to a biblical passage?
T ☒ F
6. The Purpose of a sermon and the Big Idea are the same.
T ☒ F
7. What age group do you belong to?
25-30 31-40 ☒ 41-55 56 or older
8. How long have you been in ministry?
☒ 0-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15, more than 16 years.
9. In what ways has this course been helpful in your skill development in basic biblical exegesis?
A ROAD MAP
10. Evaluate the instructor's ability to convey the material in a way that is understandable. Was he able to answer your questions? Patient in covering material? Knowledgeable about the subject?
Pastor is an INCREDIBLE TEACHER AND HAS MADE THE SCRIPTURE COME ALIVE.

Basic Biblical Exegesis

Seminar Evaluation Sheet

Instructor: Robert Marshall

Conducted: 11/2/2015

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T ☒ F
6. The Purpose of a sermon and the Big Idea are the same.
☒ T F
7. What age group do you belong to?
25-30 31-40 41-55 ☒ 56 or older
8. How long have you been in ministry?
☒ 0-5 6-10 11-15, more than 16 years.
9. In what ways has this course been helpful in your skill development in basic biblical exegesis?
10. Evaluate the instructor's ability to convey the material in a way that is understandable. Was he able to answer your questions? Patient in covering material? Knowledgeable about the subject?

Basic Biblical Exegesis
Seminar Evaluation Sheet

Instructor: Robert Marshall

Conducted: 11/2/2015

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ☒ 10
4. On a scale on 1-10, how important to the listener is it for the preacher to establish the sermon's purpose?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ☒ 10
5. Is it ever permissible for a preacher or bible teacher to assign their own meaning to a biblical passage?
T ☒ F
6. The Purpose of a sermon and the Big Idea are the same.
☒ T F
7. What age group do you belong to?
25-30 31-40 41-55 ☒ 56 or older
8. How long have you been in ministry?
0-5 ☒ 6-10 11-15, more than 16 years.
9. In what ways has this course been helpful in your skill development in basic biblical exegesis?

Very Helpful
10. Evaluate the instructor's ability to convey the material in a way that is understandable. Was he able to answer your questions? Patient in covering material? Knowledgeable about the subject?

Basic Biblical Exegesis
Seminar Evaluation Sheet

Instructor: Robert Marshall

Conducted: 11/2/2015

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4. On a scale on 1-10, how important to the listener is it for the preacher to establish the sermon's purpose?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ☒ 10
5. Is it ever permissible for a preacher or bible teacher to assign their own meaning to a biblical passage?
T ☒ F - A preacher should never assign their own meaning...
6. The Purpose of a sermon and the Big Idea are the same.
T ☒ F
7. What age group do you belong to?
25-30 ☒ 31-40 41-55 56 or older
8. How long have you been in ministry?
0-5 6-10 11-15 ☒ more than 16 years.
9. In what ways has this course been helpful in your skill development in basic biblical exegesis?
This course has helped me, in that it gives me a clear logical road-map to what I have been doing already as it pretends to biblical hermeneutics
10. Evaluate the instructor's ability to convey the material in a way that is understandable. Was he able to answer your questions? Patient in covering material? Knowledgeable about the subject?
Pastor Marshall is an exceptional facilitator, & instructor. He was thorough, solid & highly knowledgeable in all material covered.

Basic Biblical Exegesis
Seminar Evaluation Sheet

Instructor: Robert Marshall

Conducted: 11/2/2015

1. The Subject of a biblical passage is?
 - ☒ a. What the biblical writer is talking about
 - b. What the biblical writer is feeling
 - c. What the biblical writer is saying about what he is talking about
2. What is the Compliment of a biblical passage?
 - a. There is no such thing as a compliment in a biblical passage
 - b. The compliment stands on its own in a biblical passage
 - ☒ c. The compliment is what the biblical writer is saying about what he is talking about
3. On a scale on 1-10, how important is it for preachers and bible teachers to learn the skill of basic biblical exegesis?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ☒ 10
4. On a scale on 1-10, how important to the listener is it for the preacher to establish the sermon's purpose?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ☒ 10
5. Is it ever permissible for a preacher or bible teacher to assign their own meaning to a biblical passage?
☒ T ☐ F
6. The Purpose of a sermon and the Big Idea are the same.
☒ T ☐ F
7. What age group do you belong to?
25-30 31-40 ☒ 41-55 56 or older
8. How long have you been in ministry?
☒ 0-5 6-10 11-15, more than 16 years.
9. In what ways has this course been helpful in your skill development in basic biblical exegesis?
Easy way to convey to the audience, the text (scripture) you teaching from
10. Evaluate the instructor's ability to convey the material in a way that is understandable. Was he able to answer your questions? Patient in covering material? Knowledgeable about the subject?
Very patience and informed. able to answer all questions in an understandable manner.

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8. How long have you been in ministry?
☒ 0-5 6-10 11-15, more than 16 years.
9. In what ways has this course been helpful in your skill development in basic biblical exegesis?
Very helpful in understanding how scripture is conveyed to the audience
10. Evaluate the instructor's ability to convey the material in a way that is understandable. Was he able to answer your questions? Patient in covering material? Knowledgeable about the subject?
He was very good in conveying the material. He answered my questions clearly. Very Knowledgeable on the subject

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T ☒ F
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9. In what ways has this course been helpful in your skill development in basic biblical exegesis?

HOW TO TRANSLATE SCRIPTURES

10. Evaluate the instructor's ability to convey the material in a way that is understandable. Was he able to answer your questions? Patient in covering material? Knowledgeable about the subject?

GOOD HE WAS INFORMED KNEW
WHAT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT

Basic Biblical Exegesis
Seminar Evaluation Sheet

Instructor: Robert Marshall

Conducted: 11/2/2015

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T ☒ F
6. The Purpose of a sermon and the Big Idea are the same.
☒ T F
7. What age group do you belong to?
25-30 31-40 41-55 56 or ☒ older
8. How long have you been in ministry?
☒ 0-5 6-10 11-15, more than 16 years.
9. In what ways has this course been helpful in your skill development in basic biblical exegesis?
very helpful
10. Evaluate the instructor's ability to convey the material in a way that is understandable. Was he able to answer your questions? Patient in covering material? Knowledgeable about the subject?
Yes. ☒ 10

Basic Biblical Exegesis
Seminar Evaluation Sheet

Instructor: Robert Marshall

Conducted: 11/2/2015

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
5. Is it ever permissible for a preacher or bible teacher to assign their own meaning to a biblical passage?
T F
6. The Purpose of a sermon and the Big Idea are the same.
T F
7. What age group do you belong to?
25-30 31-40 41-55 56 or older
8. How long have you been in ministry?
0-5 6-10 11-15, more than 16 years
9. In what ways has this course been helpful in your skill development in basic biblical exegesis?

Help me understand how a sermon or a lesson is put together

10. Evaluate the instructor's ability to convey the material in a way that is understandable. Was he able to answer your questions? Patient in covering material? Knowledgeable about the subject?

He was very thorough in his presentation and was able to explain and answer all the questions. His knowledge is very good about the Bible

Basic Biblical Exegesis
Seminar Evaluation Sheet

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ☒ 10
4. On a scale on 1-10, how important to the listener is it for the preacher to establish the sermon's purpose?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ☒ 10
5. Is it ever permissible for a preacher or bible teacher to assign their own meaning to a biblical passage?
T F **NO!**
6. The Purpose of a sermon and the Big Idea are the same.
☒ T ☐ F
7. What age group do you belong to?
25-30 31-40 ☒ 41-55 56 or older
8. How long have you been in ministry?
☒ 0-5 6-10 11-15, more than 16 years.
9. In what ways has this course been helpful in your skill development in basic biblical exegesis?
It helps to stay focused and present a sermon in a linear way.
10. Evaluate the instructor's ability to convey the material in a way that is understandable. Was he able to answer your questions? Patient in covering material? Knowledgeable about the subject?
Instructor did take time w/material and used exercises to practice important content.

Basic Biblical Exegesis
Seminar Evaluation Sheet

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25-30 31-40 41-55 ☒ 56 or older
8. How long have you been in ministry?
0-5 6-10 11-15, more than 16 years.
9. In what ways has this course been helpful in your skill development in basic biblical exegesis?

Very helpfull

10. Evaluate the instructor's ability to convey the material in a way that is understandable. Was he able to answer your questions? Patient in covering material? Knowledgeable about the subject?

He was very helpfull in making the material understandable and was able to answer every question. He was very Patient & Knowledgeable about the subject

Basic Biblical Exegesis
Seminar Evaluation Sheet

Instructor: Robert Marshall

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8. How long have you been in ministry?
☒ 0-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15, more than 16 years.

9. In what ways has this course been helpful in your skill development in basic biblical exegesis?

I have learned a new skill. I now see how sermons are built & taught.

10. Evaluate the instructor's ability to convey the material in a way that is understandable. Was he able to answer your questions? Patient in covering material? Knowledgeable about the subject?

Great job. Yes, great answering questions, covering materials. Definitely knowledgeable.

Basic Biblical Exegesis
Seminar Evaluation Sheet

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7. What age group do you belong to?
25-30 31-40 41-55 56 or ☒ older
8. How long have you been in ministry?
0-5 6-10 11-15, more than ☒ 16 years
9. In what ways has this course been helpful in your skill development in basic biblical exegesis?
*VERY HELPFUL IN UNDERSTANDING PURPOSE AND DIRECTION
FOR SERMON DEVELOPMENT*
10. Evaluate the instructor's ability to convey the material in a way that is understandable. Was he able to answer your questions? Patient in covering material? Knowledgeable about the subject?
*VERY GOOD INSTRUCTION ANSWERED QUESTIONS VERY
KNOWLEDGEABLE AND PATIENT*

Basic Biblical Exegesis
Seminar Evaluation Sheet

Instructor: Robert Marshall

Conducted: 11/2/2015

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☒ T ☐ F
6. ~~The~~ Purpose of a sermon and the Big Idea are the same.
☒ T ☐ F
7. What age group do you belong to?
25-30 31-40 ☒ 41-55 56 or older
8. How long have you been a minister?
0-5 6-10 ☒ 11-15 ☒ more than 16 years.
9. In what ways has this course been helpful in your skill development in basic biblical exegesis?

To understand the Textual & Homiletical
Big Idea

10. Evaluate the instructor's ability to convey the material in a way that is understandable. Was he able to answer your questions? Patient in covering material? Knowledgeable about the subject?

You can tell that the Instructor knows his material - however, he needs more practice teaching others the material he knows.

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8. How long have you been in ministry?
☒ 0-5 6-10 11-15, more than 16 years.
9. In what ways has this course been helpful in your skill development in basic biblical exegesis?
I GAINED A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF ~~THE~~ STRUCTURE & LOOKING SCRIPTURES
10. Evaluate the instructor's ability to convey the material in a way that is understandable. Was he able to answer your questions? Patient in covering material? Knowledgeable about the subject?
Yes.
 - MATERIAL WAS EASILY TAUGHT.
 - ANSWERS WERE CLEAR
 - VERY PATIENT
 - VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE.

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VITA

Robert Marshall was born in Los Angeles, California. He currently resides in Long Beach, California.

Robert attended the University of La Verne, where he achieved the equivalent of a bachelor of arts degree in religion (1991). After working in the corporate world for many years and in ministry as an officer with the Salvation Army, he earned a master of arts degree in theology from George Fox Theological Seminary (2005). Robert is currently completing the “Preaching the Literary Forms of the Bible” track at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts, under the Direction of Dr. Jeffery Arthurs. He enrolled in the Gordon-Conwell Doctor of Ministry program in 2012 and his expected graduation date is May 2016.

Robert has pastored in Compton, California, and Portland, Oregon. He is presently the pastor of the Los Angeles Community Free Methodist Church in Los Angeles, California.